

U.N. arms inspection chief going to Iraq at week's end — Annan

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Richard Butler, head of the U.N. arms inspection team, will travel to Baghdad at the end of the week in a bid to persuade Iraq to allow inspectors into closed sites, U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan said on Sunday. "We are interested in the government giving access to the inspectors to go wherever they suspect illegal material may be hidden," Mr. Annan told ABC television. Iraq and the United Nations have been in a stand-off since Oct. 29, when Iraqi President Saddam Hussein threatened to expel U.S. weapons inspectors. Since their return on Nov. 21, the U.N. inspectors have carried out daily inspections without incident, but they have steered clear of "sensitive" areas.

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Police arrest loosely veiled women in Tehran

TEHRAN (AFP) — Police rounded up a number of women in the Iranian capital on Sunday after accusing them of failing to conform to the Islamic dress code in force since the 1979 revolution, witnesses said. In the northern district of Vanak, several young women wearing colourful scarves and light makeup were forced to board a police bus waiting outside a shopping mall to take them to a special centre which deals with "social vices." Iranian women are required to cover themselves from head to toe in line with the Islamic dress code. But as the code is not clearly specified the regulations are often enforced arbitrarily.

Another U-2 flew over Iraq — U.S.

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A U.S. U-2 spy plane flew over Iraq on Saturday on a U.N. mission, the Pentagon said. "It flew without incident," Major Elizabeth Kerstens, a U.S. Defence Department spokeswoman, told AFP. Earlier, Iraqi sources had said the high-altitude plane flew over the province of Karbala in the south and Erbil in the north before returning south. The plane, used to back up the work of the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of disarming Iraq, previously flew over Iraq on Nov. 10, 18 and 24, each time without incident.

Turkish police arrest two for fatal shooting

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish police have arrested two people thought to have been involved in the killing of a policeman in Istanbul last week, Anatolian news agency said Sunday. It did not say when the arrests took place. Assaults armed with automatic weapons shot dead a Turkish policeman and wounded two others in an attack on a patrol car in Istanbul Friday. The agency said members of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) rebel group were suspected of staging the attack in a working class neighbourhood on the Asian side of the city. Left-wing urban guerrillas have also carried out similar killings of policemen in the same district. Police were still searching for two other people believed to be involved in the attack, the agency said.

Emirati to be lashed for raping Filipina secretary

ABU DHABI (AFP) — An Islamic court has sentenced an Emirati businessman to 80 lashes in public for raping his Filipina secretary, a newspaper reported on Sunday. Emirates News said the court in the eastern port city of Khor Fakkan issued its verdict last week after finding Mubarak Mussa Abdullah guilty of raping his secretary four months ago. He has been jailed and is to be flogged near a mosque, the paper said, without specifying the prison term. The unnamed victim, meanwhile, plans to appeal for a heavier sentence and damages. More than 80,000 Filipinos work in the oil-rich United Arab Emirates.

King, Klima discuss Mideast peace process, bilateral ties

AMMAN (J.T.) — His Majesty King Hussein on Sunday met the visiting Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima for talks on a host of issues of mutual concern and developments of the Middle East peace process, Jordan Television said.

During the meeting which was attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, both sides affirmed the need to push forward the peace process on all tracks of negotiations to achieve a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East region.

Dr. Klima expressed his country's keenness on expanding bilateral relations and Euro-Jordanian relations in various fields, following the signing of the association agreement between Jordan and the European Union.

Mr. Klima arrived in Amman Sunday at the start of a two-day official visit to Jordan for talks on issues of common concern and the peace process.

In remarks upon his arrival at the head of a large economic delegation, Dr. Klima said his visit comes to strengthen bilateral relations and Jordan-EU ties in addition to discussing ways to set the peace process back on track.

"It is an honour to be here in Jordan. My visit has three reasons. The first is bilateral relations between Jordan and Austria. We have no political problems between our two countries. We have traditionally good and friendly rela-

tions and there is a chance to increase economic development between the companies of our two countries," he said.

He added: "The second point is Austria's preparing for the membership of the troika of the European Union (EU), and we will chair the EU in the second half of 1998 and we have to prepare ourselves to revitalise our relations because Jordan is a very important partner to the European Union. I have to congratulate it for its association agreement between Jordan and the European Union."

"The third point is the peace process in the Middle East because Jordan is a stabilising factor in the region and Aus-

tria and the European Union try to do all to support the peace process because in our opinion it is necessary to develop this process but not to stop it. It is very important to demonstrate concrete progress in this peace process," added the chancellor.

He said that he was sure that "the bilateral talks which I will hold with the prime minister and His Majesty, as well as His Royal Highness, will have enough constructive dialogue."

Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali, who was at the airport to welcome the chancellor said that Jordan maintains long historic ties with Austria, at government and

trade levels. Dr. Majali said: "Austria, which is a member of the EU, stands by Jordan on all issues and therefore we hope this visit will help us further bolster bilateral ties," adding that Jordan will brief the chancellor and the delegation on the peace process and Jordan's role.

"We will ask the Austrians to back our stand vis-a-vis the Israelis, because it is Israel that constitutes a stumbling bloc in the path of the peace process," added the prime minister.

"Having signed the association agreement with Europe, our relations with Austria are expected to be strengthened," he said.



His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan meet with visiting Austrian Chancellor Viktor Klima on Sunday evening

Israeli cabinet approves troop withdrawal

Israeli government conducting negotiations with itself — Ashrawi

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel's cabinet approved Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's proposal Sunday to go forward with a promised troop withdrawal from rural areas of the West Bank.

Sixteen cabinet ministers voted in favour of the pull-out, and two abstained.

The ministers made no decision about the extent of the withdrawal or a timetable for carrying it out, Cabinet Secretary Danny Naveh said.

"The government very soon, possibly next week, will meet and present its plans for a further re-deployment and its guidelines for final status negotiations," Mr. Naveh said.

The cabinet agreed to carry out just one re-deployment — rather than the three promised under the existing Israel-Palestinian agreements.

Mr. Naveh said the withdrawal would take place

only if both sides carried out their commitments. Israeli leaders have said the Palestinians must do more to fight terrorism.

A cabinet statement said Israel would continue "strengthening" its settlements in the West Bank, despite urgings to the contrary by both the Palestinians and the United States.

Reports have pegged the pullout at between 6 and 8 per cent of the West Bank, which the Palestinians reject as inadequate.

Mr. Netanyahu also faces intense opposition from right-wing members of his own coalition, who have threatened to bring down the government if he hands over more land to the Palestinians.

Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, speaking Sunday in Ramallah, said he hoped the size of the withdrawal would be "according to what has been agreed upon" in the previous Israel-Palestinian agreements.

and a timetable for that re-deployment. So I don't believe this is the time to start devising agreements."

The Palestinians currently have full or partial control over about 27 per cent of the West Bank. Under the existing Israel-Palestinian agreements, Israel is supposed to complete three unspecified further withdrawals from West Bank land by mid-1998.

The Palestinians rejected Israel's proposed first withdrawal — supposed to take place last March — as inadequate, and no withdrawals have yet taken place.

The Palestinians have said they will not agree to forgo any of the three withdrawal stages.

"The Israeli government is actually conducting negotiations with itself," Hanan Ashrawi said before the cabinet vote on Sunday.

"The Israelis say they want to conduct negotiations with the Palestinians — but basically there is already a signed agreement pertaining to re-deployment

and a timetable for that re-deployment. So I don't believe this is the time to start devising agreements."

The Haaretz newspaper said U.S. officials warned Saturday that Mr. Netanyahu cannot act unilaterally to delay the withdrawal or to cancel the third withdrawal.

Hundreds of Jewish settlers and their right-wing supporters demonstrated outside Mr. Netanyahu's Jerusalem residence Saturday night against the proposed withdrawal.

Earlier Saturday, dozens of Palestinians were hurt in clashes with Israeli troops in Bethlehem, and thousands more took part in protests elsewhere in the West Bank.

Arab flat in Jerusalem attacked for second time

OCCUPIED JERUSALEM (AFP) — Arsonists tried to torch a flat rented by three Israeli Arab women in west Jerusalem Sunday for the second time in a month, Israeli police said. A policeman was slightly hurt in Sunday's attack but the flat did not catch fire, police spokeswoman Linda Menuchin said, adding that a special police task force had been set up to investigate the case. Ms. Menuchin said the flat, near the ultra-Orthodox neighbourhood of Mea Shearim, was also attacked last month. Jerusalem mayor, Ehud Olmert, admitted Arabs might experience difficulties living in west Jerusalem, Israel Radio reported, but he added that Jews faced the same problems living in occupied Arab east Jerusalem. During the previous attack, the arsonists scrawled: "You have no place here" on the outside of the women's building.



Crown Prince Hassan looks through the sights of a Milan-16 rocket launcher while a British Royal Marine sergeant looks on Sunday, the final day of 'Exercise Desert Song', a joint training exercise using live ammunition between the two countries in the Qatranah desert south of Amman (Reuters photo)

Jordanian, British troops conclude joint exercises

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

QATRANEH — Jordanian and British troops Sunday concluded a month-long war games, code named Desert Song, with about two thousand soldiers from both sides taking part.

His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, after attending yesterday's 50-minute exercise, said that it was part of the ongoing military cooperation between Jordan and the United Kingdom.

"Over many years, the Jordanian Armed Forces have had a very close relationship with the British Army and I think that these young people came together obviously to learn from each other's experiences," Prince Hassan told reporters following the exercise.

The Crown Prince recalled his recent visit to the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) where "we made it very clear that our partnership is one for peace."

In this regard the Crown Prince noted that the role of the Jordanian Army is recognised "alongside not only the British Army but many other armed forces in the context of Bosnia, where we served in the past."

"So there is a tremendous deal of work to be done to maintain standards," the Crown Prince said.

Prince Hassan said that Jordan was determined to ensure

that the Armed Forces will receive up-to-date weapons.

"There is a clear strategy, supervised by His Majesty, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces, to supply the army with weapons for infantry forces and the air forces as well. It is a noble objective," he said.

Prince Hassan dismissed the notion that there is any relation between these manoeuvres with British troops and the crisis between Iraq and the U.N. over inspections of the eastern neighbour's weapons.

The exercises were "part of a continuing commitment. Last year, we had similar exercises and many in years past. We have spoken of contingencies for intervention in the event of the destabilising of any neighbouring countries, and indeed we did in the past," he said.

The Crown Prince said Jordan was deeply concerned with the plight of the Iraqi people.

"We would like to see the lifting of sanctions in compliance with international resolutions."

The Sunday exercises are the third in the past two years with British troops. Last year the two sides conducted exercises in March and October.

Lt. Colonel Jim Dutton, commander of the 40 Commando Royal Marines, said 950 British marines took part in the month-long exercises. The exercises were conducted in Tafleh and Qatranah, in the south of the country, Lt. Col. Dutton said.

The Abu Obeidah Infantry Battalion from the Jordanian Army participated in the exercises.

"The reason why we are here is that it is ideal for this sort of training. The mountain area in which we have been down, near Tafleh, is the best mountain training area that we have ever experienced anywhere in the world. And up here, this is unrivalled area for doing live firing training because you can put templates from any direction," Col. Dutton added.

Asked whether the British troops have tested new weapons in this desert, Col. Dutton said that they have used "nothing particularly new."

"Jordan is a friendly country with whom we have had good relations. We have had exercises at lower level and company level many times," Col. Dutton added.

During the Sunday exercises, while British troops used the British-made land-to-land 'Milan' missile, Jordanian troops used the French-made land-to-land missile 'Abilas' to hit the targets of a mock enemy to prepare for the advance of infantry under heavy artillery shelling by British and Jordanian units.

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Rashid submits draft elections law to Cabinet

Kingdom to be divided into 80 districts, voting age set at 18, voters to be issued magnetic cards

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Interior has prepared a new draft Elections Law which it submitted to the Council of Ministers to be studied and thereafter referred to the Parliament in its current session. Al Ra'i daily has learnt.

According to the daily, the draft law includes four basic

amendments to the present law. These are:-

1. Dividing the Kingdom into 80 electoral districts, with each voter allowed to elect only one candidate in his or her district (at present the country is divided into 21 districts).

2. Bringing the eligible age to vote down to 18 from the present 19.

3. Amending the voting system by printing the names of all candidates on the ballot papers, with the voter drawing a circle around the number of his or her favourite candidate.

4. Issuing each voter a magnetic card for voting purposes. The card makes it impossible for voters to use it more than once.

Under the present electoral system each voter is allowed to vote for one person among the candidates of his or her own district and he or she may not exercise this right more than once in any one election.

In his Speech from the Throne, His Majesty King Hussein said Saturday that the government will introduce new legislation to regulate all aspects of political life in the Kingdom. He said that a new Elections Law, a Political Parties Law and a Professional Unions Law will be introduced to Parliament for discussion and endorsement as part and parcel of the country's drive to modernise legislation.

The King stressed that the

new Elections Law will "take into consideration the changes and developments of this age, establish increased equality and justice among all the people and maintain the constants of our national march."

The current one-person, one-vote electoral system was criticised by the opposition as promoting sectarianism and tribalism, but the government was adamant and applied the same law in the 1997 parliamentary elections on Nov. 4.

The change of the electoral system was one of seven demands by the Muslim Brotherhood movement, which along with other nine parties boycotted this year's elections.

Egypt's foreign minister blames Qatari counterpart for tension

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa on Sunday blamed the spiralling tension between Cairo and Doha on Qatari Foreign Minister Sheikh Hamad Ben Jassem Ben Jaber Thani.

"There is no war of words between Qatar and Egypt. There is a difference to be made between Egyptian-Qatari relations and what the Qatari foreign minister is declaring," Mr. Musa told reporters here.

"The insults used by the Qatari foreign minister do not represent the Qatari people's point of view towards

Egypt," Mr. Musa said. "I think that relations between Qatar and Egypt are stronger than that and cannot be affected by such humiliations and strange behaviour coming from one person, even if that person is the foreign minister," Mr. Musa said.

But Mr. Musa warned that if the crisis deepens, Egypt could recall its ambassador to Doha.

"All options are open," Mr. Musa told reporters. His remarks came as Qatari newspapers Sunday voiced "disgust and shock" at insults heaped in the

Egyptian press on Sheikh Hamad.

The government-owned Cairo weekly Akhbar Al Yom accused Sheikh Hamad Saturday of being "the thief of Doha," "an inveterate gambler," and "a beast."

Relations between Egypt and Qatar have taken a serious turn for the worse in recent weeks.

Doha has accused Cairo of involvement in two failed coup attempts against the current emir in 1996. Two Egyptians were among 110 defendants at a trial which opened in Doha Wednesday

for alleged involvement in the coup attempt. They were both being tried in their absence.

Egypt has denied any involvement and President Hosni Mubarak said he was seeking clarification from Doha.

Qatar also reacted strongly to an Egyptian-led boycott of an economic conference with Israel which it hosted in mid-November.

Doha accused President Mubarak of interfering in its internal affairs after he said that even the Qatari people were against the conference going ahead.



CHILD'S FUNERAL: Iraqi people weep and shout slogans as the coffin of a child passes along a Baghdad street Sunday. The funeral procession toured the streets bearing the coffins of 50 children which Iraqi officials claimed had died due to the shortage of food and medicine. Iraq says thousands of children die each month because of shortage of medical supplies and equipment caused by sanctions imposed after the 1991 Gulf war (Reuters photo)

Yemeni ministers arrive in Saudi Arabia for talks over border dispute

RIYADH (AP) — A high-powered Yemeni delegation, led by the country's foreign and interior ministers, arrived here Sunday for talks on a border dispute that erupted into clashes last week.

Foreign Minister Abdul Karim Iryani and Interior Minister Hussein Arab were met at the airport by Saudi Foreign Minister Saud

Faisal, a Saudi official said. They were expected to hold talks with Mr. Faisal and the kingdom's interior minister, Prince Nayef, during their two-day visit, the official said.

He said the two sides would try to advance ongoing border talks. He spoke on condition his name not be used.

Both sides have reported

casualties in recent clashes on the border, which stretches some 2,000 kilometres.

Yemen contests Saudi Arabia's claim to parts of the Rub Al Khali, a vast desert region believed to be rich in oil. It accuses Saudi Arabia of building roads and constructing military posts on its territory.

Yemen has been frustrated by the lack of progress in

border talks and has said it will consider seeking international arbitration.

In August, Saudi border police fired automatic weapons at Yemeni soldiers near the Rub Al Khali, wounding eight of them. There also were fights between Yemeni and Saudi Arabian forces on tiny disputed islands in the Red Sea.

Iranian president creates body to protect rights

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iranian President Mohammad Khatami said Sunday he had set up a political body to ensure the proper application of constitutional laws.

"The Constitutional Surveillance Council was created in line with my heavy responsibilities, notably the pact I have reached with the great people of Iran," President Khatami said in a communiqué published in newspapers.

He recalled that as "the second highest official" after supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei he was "duty-bound to ensure a proper application" of the constitutional provisions.

Among the council's duties are: to formulate a guideline and prepare a report "on the proper implementation of constitutional provisions guaranteeing people's individual and social

rights" and to come up with suggestions to reform and improve laws and regulations. To introduce programmes to educate the public about their legal rights, and clarify "limits to the president's powers and responsibilities" and make reports on "cases of violations or improper execution of laws."

To make annual reports to submit to the leader, the parliament and the public.

The members appointed to the council are high-profile lawyers. Guizar Effekhar-Jahromi, Mohammad-Esmail Shoushtari, Abdolvahed Mussavi-Lari, Hussein Mehrpur and Mohammad-Hussein Hashemi.

Mr. Khatami, a moderate cleric, was elected in a landslide victory in May with a promise to expand personal freedom and ensure the rule of law.

Netanyahu advisor on 'secret' visit to China

TEL AVIV (AFP) — An advisor to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is making a "secret" visit to China to warn against proliferation of ballistic missiles or related technology, Israeli Army Radio reported Sunday.

Uzi Arad, Mr. Netanyahu's foreign policy advisor, is to meet Chinese officials Sunday to warn of the dangers of exporting long-range missiles and missile-related technology to countries such as Iran, the radio said.

Israeli Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai warned last month that Israel reserved the right to carry out "preventative strikes

against threatening weapons systems such as long-range Iranian missiles. Israeli officials have also frequently accused Tehran, which calls for the destruction of Israel, of seeking to acquire nuclear capability.

Mr. Netanyahu said in August that he had received a promise from China not to sell a nuclear reactor to Iran.

The Islamist government in Iran has never recognised Israel's right to exist, although Israeli officials have expressed hope that relations could improve under the country's relatively moderate new president, Mohammad Khatami.

'Reports of kidnappings in Yemen baseless'

SANAA (AP) — An Italian embassy official Sunday denied reports that two Italians and three other Westerners were kidnapped last week in Yemen and held for two days.

The embassy spokesman, Orazio Guanciale, said there was no evidence of any kidnappings last week.

"The reports are completely without foundation," he said.

Mr. Guanciale said the reports were fuelled by a story in the Saudi daily Okaz, which quoted security sources as saying five Westerners had been kidnapped last week. The Italian embassy said at the time that it doubted the story was true.

On Thursday, Yemeni security sources said that five Westerners — an American, two Italians and two others of unknown nationalities — had

been kidnapped a few days before and freed after two days.

But Mr. Guanciale said that other senior Yemeni officials he had spoken to had denied any kidnappings occurred.

Large swaths of land in Yemen are ruled by armed tribesmen, who often kidnap foreigners to demand money or press for concessions from the government. The victims are seldom harmed.

Employees of the Jewish

leader killed by the British in 1934, and other Hamas martyrs.

"Izzeddin Al Qassam" is today the name of the armed wing of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas), which has conducted a wave of bombings which have left scores of Israelis dead since 1994.

Sheikh Yassin also said it was "natural" that the Palestinians rejected the 1948 United Nations resolution partitioning Palestine into an Arab and Jewish state. Israel celebrated the 50th anniversary of the partition Saturday.

"The Palestinian people are in the right and it is only natural they would reject partition, just as it is natural the rapacious thieves [Israelis] would accept it since they are in any case the winners," he said.

In October Israel released Sheikh Yassin after nine years in prison in order to appease Jordan after an uproar over a

failed Israeli attempt to assassinate a Hamas official in Amman.

Agency responsible for immigration were also staying away from work, they said.

Government health insurance workers, university employees and social workers may join the open-ended strike on Monday, said Amir Peretz, the Histadrut secretary general and a Labour Party MP.

He said the strike was called to protest against "unilateral" cost-cutting moves by the

Treasury. Unions have also voiced displeasure about government privatisation moves warning they could lead to massive layoffs.

In September, Histadrut shut down the country with an eight-hour strike.

The work stoppage comes amid rising unemployment and a slowdown in economic growth since Prime Minister Netanyahu took office last year.

Israel warns its soldiers against Hamas kidnappings

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The Israeli army has warned its troops to be on the guard amid reports of plans by the Islamist group Hamas to kidnap soldiers, military sources said Sunday.

The army told its troops to stick by rules concerning hitchhiking, a common mode of transport for off-duty soldiers, but one which has been exploited in the past by anti-Israeli Palestinian groups to snatch soldiers.

Army rules bar soldiers from hitchhiking in the West Bank and restrict the practice to daytime-only inside Israeli territory.

The army has information that the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) is planning to kidnap soldiers or civilians to ransom for the release of Islamist prisoners held by Israel, military sources said.

Some 4,000 Palestinians are currently imprisoned by Israel. Hamas, which is opposed to the self-rule accords signed by the PLO and Israel, has led a campaign of bombings and anti-Israeli attacks which have left scores dead since 1994.

Israeli public sector workers go on strike

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Some 150,000 Israeli public sector workers went on strike Sunday to protest against government cost-cutting moves, union officials said.

Municipal clerical workers, hospital and nursery employees and firefighters were among those observing the work stoppage called by the main Israeli labour union Histadrut, they said.

Employees of the Jewish

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17:00...French Programmes
19:00...News in French
19:15...French programme
19:30...News Headline
19:35...Comedy — Murphy Brown
20:00...The Health Show
20:30...Baby-lon-5
21:10...Highlanders
22:00...News in English
22:30...Emergency Room
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JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590 Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440. De la Salle Church Tel. 691757. Terra Sancta Church Tel. 622366. Anglican Church Tel. 652826. Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331. Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261. St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751. Armenian International Church Tel. 5516245. Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 824328. German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel. 688404. The Latter-Day Saints Tel. 654322. Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691. The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel. 811295. English-speaking Latin Catholics Parish Tel. 614190.	prevail, winds northerly moderate, and seas calm. Min/Max. temp. Amman.....08/18 Aqaba.....14/26 Deserts.....07/20 Jordan Valley.....12/24 Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 16, Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 53 per cent, Aqaba 37 per cent.	AMMAN: Dr. Nasser Ibrahim.....830432 Dr. Bahjat Bader.....822642 Dr. Wafiq Qaddumi.....592542 Dr. Yahya Abdul Rahim 736072 Firas pharmacy.....661912 Ferdows pharmacy.....778336 Al Aserna pharmacy.....637055 Nairokh pharmacy.....623672 Al Salam pharmacy.....636730 Yacoub pharmacy.....644945 Shmeisani pharmacy.....637660 Najib pharmacy.....847632 IRBID: Dr. Ghazi Ta'mneh.....250080	Al Quds pharmacy.....121 ZARQA: Dr. Walid Nabhan.....95743 Khalifeh pharmacy.....95417 EMERGENCIES Food Control Centre.....637111 Civil Defence Department.....61111 Civil Defence Immediate Rescue630341 Civil Defence Emergency.....190 Rescue Police.....192, 621111, 687777 Fire Brigade.....617101 Blood Bank.....775121 Traffic Police.....843402 Public Security Dept.....630321 Hotel Complaints.....605800 Price Complaints.....661176 Water & Sewerage Complaints.....80746 Amman Municipality Complaints.....787111 Telephone Information Directory (assistance).....121 Overseas Calls.....010230 Central Amman Telephone Repairs.....623101 Abdali Tel. Repairs.....601101 Jordan Television.....773111 Radio Jordan.....774111 Water Authority.....680100 J. Electricity Authority.....815615 Electric Power Co.....636281 RJ Flight Information.....08-53200	Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53200 HOSPITALS AMMAN: Luzulu.....630195 Husein Medical Centre.....813813/32 Khalidi Maternity.....642816 Akileh Maternity.....642412 Jabal Amman Maternity.....642362 Malhas, J. Amman.....636140 Palestine, Shmeisani.....607071 Shmeisani Hospital.....609131 University Hospital.....645845 Al-Muasher Hospital.....6672270 The Islamic, Abdali.....666126/37 Al-Ahli, Abdali.....666164/66 Italian, Al-Muhajreen.....777101/3 Al-Bashir.....775111/26 Army, Marka.....891611/15 Queen Alia Hospital.....602240/50 Arnal Hospital.....674155 The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery.....865199 ZARQA: Zarqa Govt. Hospital.....09983323 Zarqa National Hospital.....094005/64 Ibn Sina Hospital.....09496732 Al Hikma Modern Hospital.....09499990 IRBID: Princess Basma Hospital.....02275555 Greek Catholic Hospital.....02272725	Ibn Al Nafies Hospital.....021247100 AQABA: Princess Haya Hospital 08/314111 FOR THE TRAVELLER QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. 08152005, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on phone 08152700. ARRIVALS Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights 08:25.....Damascus (RJ) 08:35.....Jeddah (RJ) 08:35.....Sanaa (RJ) 09:30.....New Delhi (RJ) 09:50.....Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ) 10:05.....Beirut (RJ) 16:20.....Cairo (RJ) 16:25.....London (RJ) 18:05.....Kuwait (RJ) 18:55.....Casablanca, Tunis (RJ) 20:45.....Kuala Lumpur (RJ) 22:15.....Bangkok (RJ) 23:15.....Jakarta, Abu Dhabi (RJ) Other Flights 04:15.....London (BA) 09:15.....Cairo (MS) 09:30.....Al Arish (PF) 12:00.....Khartoum (SD) 13:25.....Bahrain (GF) 14:30.....Doha (QR) 15:05.....Vienna (OS) 16:00.....Dubai (EK) 18:00.....Istanbul (SD) 20:00.....Tel Aviv (RW) 21:10.....Paris, Damascus (AF) 22:30.....Athens (OA) 01:25.....Amsterdam (KL) Royal Wings (RW) 06:05.....Tel Aviv (RW) 07:25.....Amman (QAIA) (RW) 07:15.....Amman (Marka) (RW) 09:50.....Amman (QAIA) (RW) 11:10.....Amman (QAIA) (RW) 12:00.....Amman (Marka) (RW) 21:20.....Amman (Marka) (RW) 22:50.....Amman (Marka) (RW) DEPARTURES Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights 06:20.....Beirut (RJ) 11:00.....Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ) 11:15.....Frankfurt (RJ) 06:00.....Istanbul (TK) 06:00.....Beirut (ME) 08:25.....London (BA) 10:30.....Al Arish (PF) 10:30.....Cairo (MS) 13:20.....Istanbul (SD) 14:15.....Bahrain (GF) 15:50.....Doha (QR) 15:50.....Vienna (OS) 17:00.....Damascus, Dubai (EK) 19:00.....Khartoum (SD) 21:20.....Tel Aviv (LY) 23:53.....Damascus, Paris (AF) 02:25.....Amsterdam (KL) 03:00.....Athens (OA) Royal Wings (RW) 05:30.....Amman (Marka) (RW) 06:50.....Tel Aviv (RW) 07:55.....Amman (QAIA) (RW) 08:50.....Amman (Marka) (RW) 10:20.....Aqaba (RW) 11:40.....Amman (QAIA) (RW) 20:30.....Amman (QAIA) (RW) 21:50.....Aqaba (RW)
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TARIQAH RECEIVES CO
Tariqah Sunday receives
Zargan and reviews the Iraq-U.S.
process (Petra photo)

24th woman year for reas

By Rama Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter
AMMAN — Police are questioning a 24-year-old woman who Friday allegedly shot and killed her husband and wounded a man in a car crash for "immoral behaviour," according to official sources.
The victim, Amman resident, was shot several times by her brother, who was not identified by the authorities. The suspect was arrested late Friday night, according to the official source.
The suspect also was charged with a murder she committed

Majali underlines importance of Islam in daily life

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Sunday underlined the importance of Islamic piety, honesty and teaching in helping people deal with problems in their daily life and the change occurring in society.
During a meeting at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs with Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abudhi, Dr. Majali said the Friday mosque sermon and the role of mosque preachers are important since they can help address social problems.

Mosque preachers should conduct this work in an objective and scientific manner based on accurate information related to religion, he said.
Dr. Abudhi briefed the prime minister on the ministry's plans and programmes.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CHRISTMAS CHOICES
Annual YWCA Christmas celebration, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday at the Royal Cultural Centre.
EXHIBITIONS
Plastic (abstract) art by Mohammed Al-Ghazal, until Dec. 7.
Works by Ghada Dahdaleh at Baghdad Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 7.
Paintings on fine porcelain at the Centre, Labal Weibdeh, until Dec. 7.
Paintings by Ammar Khammash at the Centre, Labal Weibdeh, until Dec. 7.
Paintings by Saudi Al Kaabi at the Centre, Labal Weibdeh, until Dec. 4.
An exhibition of prints by Algerian artist Mahmoud Darwish, at Darwish Street (Tel. 699131/2), until Dec. 31. Also displayed are the works of Nasr Abdul Aziz, and others, until Dec. 10.
Exhibition of wall hangings and works by others at Noor Al Hussein, at the Centre, Labal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31. Also displayed are the works of Nasr Abdul Aziz, and others, until Dec. 10.
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TARAWNEH RECEIVES COMMUNIST LEADER: Foreign Minister Fayez Tarawneh Sunday receives Russian Communist Party leader Gennady Zuyvanov and reviews the Iraq-U.N. crisis and the faltering Middle East peace process (Petra photo)

24th woman murdered this year for reasons of 'honour'

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Police are questioning a 38-year-old man who Friday allegedly shot and killed his married sister and wounded a man in Sahab for "immoral behaviour," according to official sources.

The victim, Amneh Abdoh, 29, was shot several times by her brother, who was not identified by the authorities, in her husband's house late Friday night, according to the official source.

The suspect also shot and wounded a man he claimed

was in the house with his sister, the source maintained, adding that the brother then went and turned himself in to the police.

According to the source, the victim's husband had been in police detention one week before the incident occurred.

On the night of the incident, the victim's brother went to his sister's house to visit her late at night, and when he entered her house, "he saw his sister in an 'immoral situation', drew a gun he was carrying, and shot his sister and the man with her," according to the source.

"Amneh died instantly after receiving bullets to different parts of her body. The man was only hit in the leg and is being treated at a hospital," the source told the Jordan Times Sunday.

The source added that the brother is still in police custody pending further investigation.

Ms. Abdoh became the 24th woman reportedly killed in a crime of honour in Jordan since the beginning of the year.

Last year, police reports indicated that 19 women were killed for similar reasons.

Majali underlines importance of Islam in daily life

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Sunday underlined the importance of Islamic philosophy and teaching in helping people deal with problems in their daily life and the changes occurring in society.

During a meeting at the Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs with Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Abdul Salam Abbadi, Dr. Majali said the Friday mosque sermon and the role of mosque preachers are important since they can help address social problems.

Mosque preachers should conduct this work in an objective and scientific manner based on accurate information related to religion, he said.

Dr. Abbadi briefed the prime minister on the ministry's plans and programmes.

Islamic-Christian interfaith meeting opens next week

AMMAN (Petra) — The Royal Academy of Islamic Civilisation Research (Al Bayt Foundation) is organising an Islamic-Christian interfaith dialogue in conjunction with the Vatican next Wednesday under the patronage of HRH Crown Prince Hassan.

The participants in the three-day dialogue, the sixth of its kind to be organised by the foundation, are Muslim and Vatican scholars who will present their views on three major topics: the concept of human dignity, the Muslim and Christian stand vis-à-vis mankind, and present challenges and aspirations.

At least 38 intellectuals from 15 countries are taking part in the dialogue. They include representatives from Jordan, Lebanon, the U.K., Mauritania, Iraq, Bosnia, Egypt, Italy, the U.S., Algeria,

Switzerland, Nigeria, Senegal, Ireland, and Palestine.

The foundation has since 1984 organised a series of Muslim-Christian meetings grouping prominent world scholars.

In remarks about the upcoming meeting, Al Bayt Foundation President Dr. Assad said the scholars will exchange views and ideas for the purpose of building bridges of understanding and cooperation between the followers of the two monotheistic faiths.

These meetings, he added, aim at creating the opportune climate for enlightened Muslims and Christians to discuss contemporary problems and giving Muslim and Christian youths the chance to offer ideas in a free and objective manner for solving problems that they encounter.

Trial of 4 accused of plotting attacks on Israel during Ramadan postponed

By Rana Hussein
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The State Security Court Sunday postponed the case of four suspects accused of plotting attacks against Israel to Dec. 15, when it will either issue a verdict or continue the proceedings.

The four suspects, Abdul Rahim Yousef, 25, Mujahed Abdul Jawad, 29, Sa'oud Mohammad, 24, and his 21-year-old brother Issa are accused of possessing illegal explosives (two grenades) and automatic weapons with illicit intent.

A fifth suspect, Sergeant Ali M., is being tried in a separate military court on the same charges.

The prosecution is charging that the five men obtained the arms to infiltrate Israel through Wadi Araba in southern Jordan during the month of Ramadan to launch an assault there.

During Sunday's court session, the military tribunal heard the final argument from the Mohammad brothers' Defence Attorney Ahmad Hantoush, who asked the court to acquit his clients of the charges.

Atty. Hantoush challenged the investigation procedures of the prosecution and charged that his clients were forced to confess after being subjected to torture by security forces.

Last month, the Mohammad brothers testified in

court that they had indeed planned to attack Israel during this coming Ramadan and the one after, "but changed their minds because they all supported families."

The two brothers said they disposed of the arms and explosives by burying them under a tree near Sa'oud Mohammad's house.

Also Sunday, the same court tribunal, headed by Judge Yousef Faouri and including Judges Ahmad Ayash and Mohammad Huneity, postponed the case of ten people accused of smuggling arms to the West Bank to Dec. 15.

The ten people, including two being tried in absentia, are charged with smuggling guns, rifles, and automatic

weapons.

Two of the eight defendants last month told the court that they were smuggling arms to the West Bank in rubber boats via the Dead Sea. The remaining six retracted their previous confessions and denied being involved with the rest of the group.

During Sunday's session, Atty. Mohammad Dweik, Walid Udwan, and Mohammad Sa'oud presented their closing arguments to the court, asking for their clients' acquittals on all charges.

The attorneys also claimed in their arguments that their clients were forced to confess under duress.

Atty. Dweik, who is defending Omar Abdul

Hamid, one of two main suspects in the case who confessed to smuggling arms, stated in court that his client was the victim of circumstances. "Because he was forced to smuggle weapons,"

"My client's son was kidnapped by an individual from the West Bank, who forced him to smuggle the weapons," Atty. Dweik said.

According to the prosecution charge sheet, four of the ten defendants, who were West Bank residents, decided in 1995 to smuggle weapons from Jordan for profit.

The four smuggled weapons to the West Bank until their arrest by Jordanian security forces on April 13, 1997.

Public transport company to become regulatory body

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — As part of its privatisation plans, the government has decided to transform the Public Transport Corporation (PTC) into a regulatory body that will monitor the operations of two new privately-owned transport companies, according to PTC General Manager Marwan Khitan.

It was earlier reported that the PTC has encountered losses amounting to JD100,000 each month while serving only six per cent of people using public transportation.

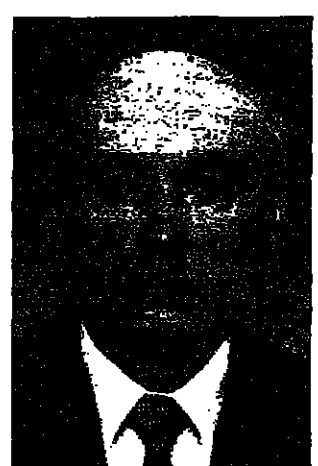
Mr. Khitan told the Jordan Times Sunday that the PTC will, by March 1999, no longer be a transport operator but will serve as a regulatory body along the lines of the Telecommunications Regulatory Commission (TRC), which facilitates the operations of privately-owned telecommunications companies.

Mr. Khitan said the government is soon expected to place bids for the two new transport companies which, he added, might be fully locally-owned or joint projects with foreign investors.

The two private transport companies, which will give consideration to environmental concerns, Mr. Khitan added, are expected to commence operations by mid-1999.

Romanian ambassador praises bilateral ties

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter



Ioan Agaficioia

ty.

"Thus, we support the initiative [towards peace] of any country and especially the U.S., which is acting as a broker in the peace process, since we are convinced that any deterioration of the situation in the Middle East will have negative repercussions throughout the region," said the ambassador.

On bilateral ties, particularly in the economy sector, Mr. Agaficioia said there was need on both sides for more efforts to bolster commercial exchange, deepen economic cooperation, and reach a balance in the volume of trade between the two countries, now clearly in favour of Romania.

Romanian exports to the Kingdom are nine times higher than those of Jordan to the Balkan country.

A positive development, though, according to the ambassador, is the fact that for the last few years, Jordan's exports to Romania, which traditionally were made up of phosphate and cement, have started to include manufactured goods like medicine, detergents, other chemical products, and electrical goods, as well as citrus fruit and vegetables.

Romania will continue support of Kingdom's peace efforts — ambassador

AMMAN (Petra) — Romania will continue to support Jordan's efforts spearheaded by His Majesty King Hussein to achieve a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East that can guarantee the rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to establish an independent state on Palestinian soil, Romanian Ambassador to Jordan Ioan Agaficioia said Sunday.

Speaking on the eve of his country's national day, the ambassador said Jordan and Romania maintain very strong ties at different levels.

Referring to trade, he said the volume of exchange between Jordan and Romania has reached \$30 million and is increasing.

With reference to education, the ambassador said thousands of Jordanian students are currently enrolled in Romanian universities, which have to date graduated more than 10,000 Jordanians.

On the political and economic situation in Romania, the ambassador stated that his country was pursuing the path of democracy and believes in the free market, equality, respect of human rights, and building good ties with its neighbours.

Romania is seeking to join the European Union and NATO so that it can contribute more towards the creation of united Europe where all its people can live in prosperity, progress, and peace, the ambassador added.

There are, according to recent statistics, about 2,500 Jordanian companies operating in Romania, most of them small and trade-oriented, although some have turned to production and even agricultural projects.

Besides the commercial exchange, there is cooperation in the implementation of economic projects. About 200 Romanians from Industrialexport S.A. work in Agaba on a turn-key project for oil storage tanks and some 80 work for an aluminium-product factory.

Moreover, in May 1997, Electromontaj S.A., Romania, and National Electric and Power Company (NEPCO) signed a contract whereby the former will connect the electric grids of Jordan and Syria.

In a bid to further increase and diversify economic cooperation, so far this year

over 2,000 Jordanian businesspeople visited Romania and about 300 Romanian entrepreneurs came to Jordan to negotiate new contracts.

Between Dec. 9 and 11, Amman will host the Romanian Trade Week, during which 16 companies are expected to participate.

Cultural ties between the two countries are also strong. Jordanian youth are interested in studying in Romania, said Ambassador Agaficioia, and about 30 to 50 young people study in Romania yearly.

"These add to the 10,000 who already graduated from Romanian universities," added the envoy, who expressed hope that relations between the two countries will continue to develop and that cooperation will expand to the benefit of the two peoples.

WHAT'S GOING ON

CHRISTMAS CHOIR

* Annual YWCA Christmas classical choir on Wednesday, Thursday, Saturday, and Sunday (Dec. 3, 4, 6, and 7) at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

* Plastic (abstract) art by Mohammad Qaddumi at the Royal Cultural Centre, until Dec. 7.

* Works by Ghada Dahdaleh at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens Street (Tel. 5537598), until Dec. 10.

* Paintings on fine porcelain at the Arts and Crafts Centre (Artisana) (Tel. 6171118) until Dec. 2.

* Paintings by Ammar Khammash at the French Cultural Centre, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 12.

* Paintings by Saadi Al Kaabi at Orient Gallery (Tel. 681303/4), until Dec. 4.

* An exhibition of prints by Algerian artist Koraisi, and calligraphy by Iraqi artist Massoudi, inspired by the poems of Mahmoud Darwish, at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh, until Dec. 31. Also displaying paintings by Jordanian artist Nasr Abdul Aziz, and works by contemporary Arab artists.

* Works by Khalid Khreis at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 10.

* Exhibition of wallhangings and weavings by Bashar Kathem and others at Noor Al Hussein Foundation, off Wadi Saqra Street (Tel. 699131/2) until Dec. 4.

* "Journey Within" by Pakistani artist Gulgee and his son, sculptor Amin Gulgee, at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (Tel. 630128), until Dec. 15.

AIDS in Jordan — a case of the 'not me' syndrome

AMMAN (United Nations) — Today, on the tenth anniversary of World AIDS Day, the millions who have died of acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) will be remembered. And the 22 million people living with the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) around the world will also be remembered. By the year 2000, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), this figure will have nearly doubled to 40 million.

The figures for HIV/AIDS in Jordan are nowhere near as dramatic — since 1986, a total of 164 HIV/AIDS cases have been recorded, 49 of which have resulted in AIDS-related deaths. But these figures are growing steadily, as they are in other developing countries. This year alone, 28 new cases have already been detected in the country.

HIV/AIDS statistics reveal only the tip of the iceberg, according to Ziad Najjar, programme manager for the National AIDS/STD Control Programme (NASCP) at the Ministry of Health. "Our biggest challenge is to keep this low prevalence of the disease."

Founded in 1986 after the first AIDS case was discovered in Jordan, the NASCP has been educating the public about prevention as well as providing care and social support. It has also been regularly screening high-risk groups such as carriers of sexually transmitted diseases (STD), intravenous drug users, prostitutes, tuberculosis patients, and recipients of blood transfusions.

Figures released by the Ministry of Health indicate that contaminated blood or blood products were the leading cause of HIV/AIDS cases recorded in Jordan, followed by heterosexual contact with an infected partner. However, the ministry figures also revealed that an overwhelming 80 per cent of HIV/AIDS cases detected in Jordan were contracted outside the country, and that nearly 40 per cent of HIV/AIDS carriers were non-Jordanians.

"Jordan is lucky, its cultural heritage has helped control the spread of AIDS," agreed Omar Suleiman, chairman of the UNAIDS in Jordan, a joint United Nations programme on HIV/AIDS that has been working closely with the NASCP in combating sexually transmitted diseases.

"The risk is there however," warned Dr. Suleiman. "Jordan is at a crossroad where tourism is increasing. Any communicable disease in this global village is a problem."

Current government regulations stipulate that non-Jordanians must be deported, a controversial policy that is also followed in many Western countries. For Jordanians with HIV/AIDS, the Ministry of Health has made it a priority to respond swiftly by providing them with education and counselling.

"Many AIDS patients enter a stage of denial and refuse to believe they have the disease in the beginning," explained Dr. Najjar. "This first step we take is to offer them the social support they need through counselling."

In addition to the emotional trauma of coping with the disease, HIV/AIDS patients face staggering medical expenses. Although the government is covering the treatment costs of AIDS-related illnesses such as pneumonia, diarrhoea, and a string of other infections, it is unable to finance the recently-introduced cocktail drug treatment priced at \$20,000 per person per year.

As a result, only independently wealthy and medically-insured Jordanians have been able to purchase the drugs through pharmaceutical companies abroad.

The NASCP has been trying to promote home-based care, a practice that is recommended by the WHO.

"Home-based care provides moral, economic, and social support to the diseased person," said Dr. Suleiman, who is also the WHO representative in Jordan. "It helps communicate that there is no danger in socializing, eating,

and living with people suffering from AIDS."

In spite of the social stigma and fear propagated by AIDS, the NASCP has managed to build strong alliances with NGOs, religious groups, and community leaders. Women's groups in particular have been responsive to the national fight against the spread of HIV/AIDS.

According to the United Nations, women are "biologically, epidemiologically, and socially more vulnerable" to HIV.

In Jordan, the female ratio of HIV carriers has increased from 1:5 in 1996 to 1:3 today.

In the face of this debilitating global epidemic for which a cure has yet to be found, the NASCP has placed heavy emphasis on prevention. "The cornerstone of our national programme is to start with healthy people," explained Dr. Najjar.

As part of its public awareness initiatives, the NASCP has introduced the topic of HIV/AIDS into the curriculum of schools and medical institutions, promoted education in the

work place and vocational training centers and launched condom distributions in health clinics.

Plans are also underway to establish a telephone hotline to encourage individuals to seek information from a reliable source.

A survey conducted by the NASCP earlier this year revealed startling results — Jordanians are adequately informed about HIV/AIDS, but their high level of knowledge was not necessarily reflected in their behavior.

Dr. Najjar attributed this to the "not me" syndrome, where HIV/AIDS is regarded mainly as a problem of other countries.

To date, over 60 per cent of individuals afflicted with HIV/AIDS in Jordan were found among the 15-39 age group.

"People are fatalists, they are only impressed by big numbers," Dr. Najjar said, referring to the relatively low incidence of the disease in Jordan.

"If we don't have effective intervention based on behavioral changes and safer practices, AIDS will steal our future."

World braces for battle over global warming

KYOTO, Japan (AFP) — Deep rifts divided the world's key players Sunday on the eve of a critical 10-day conference aimed at clamping legally binding cuts on greenhouse gas emissions.

Last-minute talks aimed at bridging the gaps in the fight against global warming succeeded only in highlighting the yawning differences among developed nations and between rich and poor countries.

Raul Estrada, chairman of the preparatory talks which began in October in Bonn and continued here Sunday, said he wanted to "resolve outstanding issues" on the eve of the Kyoto conference proper.

But no resolutions were found to the myriad of thorny issues that more than 150 countries will have to tackle if they are to agree on a Kyoto protocol to combat the threat of global warming.

In the developed world the United States, Europe and Japan all have widely differing proposals for reducing emissions of gases blamed for trapping the earth's heat.

Moreover, the United States insists that developing countries, including major greenhouse gas emitters such as China, should agree at Kyoto to bear some of the burden.

In a pointed reference to Washington, Mr. Estrada said "some developed countries" were asking developing countries for commitments but had failed to fulfil their own.

The landmark 1992 Rio convention called for greenhouse gas emissions, blamed for the warming of the earth, to be returned to their 1990 levels by 2000.

Taking 1990 greenhouse gas emissions as a base, Europe is calling for a 15 per cent cut by 2010, Japan for a five per cent cut between 2008 and 2012 and the United States for no change between 2008 and 2012.

But each of the offers has a different underlying basis. The United States, for example, includes six "greenhouse gases" in its proposal while Europe and Japan include only three in theirs.

Mr. Estrada sought an agreement that would include six gases in any deal at Kyoto but the proposal met immediate objections from Japan and Britain, which called for cuts in just three gases to remain an option.

The price of failure in Kyoto would be high, according to reports on the impact of climate change issued by the U.N. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Drought in Africa, partial melting of the polar ice caps, flooding in Asian countries such as Bangladesh, the disappearance of low-lying islands and similar rapid changes elsewhere in the world are among the forecasts.

At a meeting of 18 Asia-Pacific nations, including the United States and China, in Vancouver last week, members could only agree on one point — support for a "successful outcome" at Kyoto.

Japanese Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto admitted there was much ground yet to cover. "When we discussed a target to cut greenhouse gas emissions, opinions were still widely divided," Mr. Hashimoto said.

Washington has called for countries to be allowed to "buy" emission cuts from countries that have cut further than their targets, a proposal yet to gain widespread support.

While Washington faces strong pressure from elsewhere to strengthen its offer, it is taking heat at home from big business which fears strict cuts in greenhouse gas emissions could extinguish strong economic growth.

U.S. automakers, oil companies and unions are running advertising campaigns warning that even

U.S. President Bill Clinton's current plan will raise energy costs by at least 20 per cent, eliminate jobs and price U.S. exports out of the market.

While visiting Japan earlier in the month, Chinese Premier Li Peng acknowledged the seriousness of the global warming problem but said all countries should take action appropriate to their own conditions.

"Those who are overweight need to be on a diet while those who are undernourished need more nutrition," Mr. Li said.

Australia, meanwhile, comes to Kyoto with a proposal which allows it to increase greenhouse gas emissions by 18 per cent by 2010 while calling for the Kyoto conference to take different countries' circumstances into account.

Major world powers were seeking "their own targets according to their own circumstances" — they say taking into account other countries' circumstances is too complicated, said Meg McDonald, Australian ambassador for the environment.

"But I think that there are a large number of other players who agree with us that differentiation (taking each country's circumstances into account) is essential," she said.



Children from various countries hold up a board displaying cards sent from throughout the world calling for a 20 per cent cut in greenhouse gas emissions, at the Heian Shrine in Japan's ancient capital of Kyoto (Reuters photo).

Fair elections in Cambodia hinge on killings probe — U.N. official

PHNOM PENH (AFP) — The Cambodian government must investigate and act on scores of allegedly politically motivated killings if upcoming elections are to be considered free and fair, a senior U.N. official said Sunday.

"If there is no action ... I think that is a very bad omen for free and fair elections," said Thomas Hammarberg, the United Nations secretary general's special representative for human rights in Cambodia.

"It is a major point," he said, noting that impunity for those who commit such crimes has long been Cambodia's most serious human rights issue.

Mr. Hammarberg, who arrived here Sunday for a six-day visit, has severely criticised the Phnom Penh government for its apparent lack of seriousness in investigating the executions of more than 40 supporters of deposed co-premier Prince Norodom Ranariddh following his violent ouster in July.

"Many months have passed and we expect some results," he said. "I haven't seen any report that indicates they have been serious."

He added that he and other human rights officials were still waiting for the government's promised investigation into a March 30 grenade attack on an opposition rally that killed at least 16 people.

"It has been six months (in that case) and we expect results," he said.

"The situation is such that it is necessary to be concerned about security for politically active people," he said.

'Swiss siphoned off WWII money for POWs'

LONDON (R) — Switzerland's World War II government used allied funds intended to aid British and American prisoners of war to repatriate Swiss money from Japan, a British newspaper reported Sunday.

The Sunday Telegraph said in a report from Washington that a wartime document found in U.S. archives suggested "a massive misappropriation of funds" by the Swiss.

The document is a translated transcript of an intercepted Swiss diplomatic cable between Bern and Washington from November 1945, the newspaper said.

The document shows that in August 1944 neutral Switzerland reached a secret agreement with Tokyo to divert 40 per cent of the money paid by the British and American governments to provide relief for their prisoners in Japanese captivity.

The 40 per cent was used "for the transfer of Swiss claims in Japan" while the remaining 60 per cent was at the free disposal of the Japanese government, the document says.

An advance team of self-exiled supporters of Prince Ranariddh are due to arrive here Monday to determine whether the situation is safe enough for them to return permanently.

The government has rejected previous criticism that their investigations were not going anywhere and said it was fully prepared to ensure that the elections, now scheduled for May, would be free and fair.

The international community has made it clear that unless the elections are considered "free, fair and credible," they will not be prepared to fully recognise the government now effectively led by powerful Second Prime Minister Hun Sen.

Their reading of the elections is expected to be based heavily on Mr. Hammarberg's reports as well as those of a team of U.N. monitors who began arriving in Phnom Penh Sunday.

Mr. Hammarberg made it clear that he and his office would not back down.

"My focus will be on the impunity aspect," he said, adding that he would be also be officially informing the government of a U.N. resolution passed last week authorising the secretary general to send experts to investigate genocide and crimes against humanity charges against the Khmer Rouge guerrilla faction.

"This is a serious step" towards bringing the Khmer Rouge leadership to justice before an international tribunal, he said.

Yeltsin unlikely to shed light on Wallenberg saga

STOCKHOLM (R) — Swedes anxious to solve the 50-year-old mystery of missing diplomat Raoul Wallenberg are unlikely to get any new answers from Russian President Boris Yeltsin visits Sweden this week, officials said Sunday.

The 1945 disappearance of Wallenberg, a member of Sweden's most powerful industrial family, has been one of the most enduring mysteries of World War II and haunted relations between Stockholm and Moscow since the war.

Annika Soder, spokeswoman for Sweden's Foreign Ministry, said the Wallenberg affair would be raised during Mr. Yeltsin's visit from Tuesday to Thursday, the first state visit to Sweden by a Russian president since 1909.

"The issue will be brought up between the president and Sweden's Prime Minister Goran Persson," Ms. Soder told a media briefing ahead of the visit.

A limited opening up of Soviet files since the end of the cold war has not been able to shed new light on Wallenberg's fate and Swedish officials are pessimistic about the possibility of a new breakthrough.

Wallenberg, a businessman holding a diplomatic passport from neutral Sweden, was sent to Budapest in July 1944 during the Soviet occupation of Hungary.

With little regard for his own safety, he issued Swedish passports to Hungarian Jews, hid them in safe houses while planning their escapes, and verbally threatened Nazi generals.

He is credited with saving thousands of Hungarian Jews from Hitler's gas chambers.

Wallenberg was last seen in January 1945, being driven off to see Marshal Rodion Malinovsky, commander of the Soviet troops occupying Budapest after the German retreat.

Reports gradually surfaced that Wallenberg had been tried in the Soviet Union for espionage but Moscow denied all knowledge of his whereabouts until the release in 1957 of a handwritten note from a doctor at Moscow's Lubyanka jail.

The note, dated July 17, 1947, said Wallenberg had died of a heart attack in his cell overnight.

But the Swedish Raoul Wallenberg group and his family have refused to believe that Wallenberg, then 34 and in excellent health, could have suffered a heart attack.

They have disputed the authenticity of the Soviet document.

Over the years, until the end of the cold war, there were persistent reports from inmates of Soviet jails saying they had seen the missing diplomat alive. If alive he would now be 85.

None of the reported sightings could ever be proven.

Other theories claimed he was executed. Others said he died in a Soviet gulag.

Following the break-up of the Soviet Union, Russian authorities have allowed the Wallenberg group access to secret documents in their attempts to discover his fate.

A joint Swedish-Russian working group is continuing to examine relevant documents, partly from Soviet archives.

Group coordinator Lage Olsson at the Swedish Foreign Ministry said the group's final report will probably be released sometime in 1998.

"We have dug out a great deal of information. But we have not solved the mystery," Mr. Olsson told Reuters.

Moscow has said searches in Soviet archives since the end of the cold war have produced nothing to contradict the official version that Wallenberg died in Lubyanka jail in 1947.

Canada plays key role in fight against anti-personnel mines

MONTREAL (AFP) — Canadian officials are proud of the key role they have played in rallying countries behind the global treaty banning anti-personnel mines, to be signed later in the week in Ottawa.

For more than a year Canada has used its political and diplomatic clout to rally recalcitrant nations to join the "Ottawa process" that bans the weapons, which kill or injure one person every 22 minutes.

The treaty will be signed by representatives of 105 countries Dec. 2-4 in Ottawa.

Even though three of the world's leading powers — the United States, China and Russia — will not sign the treaty, Canadian officials believe pressure from the process has forced them to take steps to curb the use of mines.

The Canadian effort began on May 3, 1996, in Geneva when, at the end of a U.N.-sponsored conference, Canadian delegate Bob Lawson said that his country was unhappy about a compromise reached there merely limiting their use.

"It grew out of a sense of frustration on existing diplomatic processes," a senior Canadian official said this week. The non-governmental organisations working to ban land mines "came and said, 'you are talking about the wrong

issue here," the official said. "Instead of talking about how you could mitigate the effects of the antipersonnel mines, you've got to talk how to ban them."

In October 1996 Canada decided to call what became the Ottawa conference on mines, which set a deadline of December 1997 to draft a treaty to ban the devices.

Canadian officials then began the task of convincing one nation after another of the need to ban anti-personnel mines, devices that maim both soldiers and innocent civilians.

Prime Minister Jean Chrétien and Foreign Minister Lloyd Axworthy travelled around the world to get signatories for the pact, carrying their message from the Commonwealth summit to the Francophone summit, and on trips to Russia and tours to Asia.

"The Ottawa Process community has been accused of being a club of angels," Mr. Axworthy said in October. "We have been called inflexible, radical, unethical and even Stalinistic. We have been criticised for leading a crusade."

"(That was) not our usual image of boy scouts of the world community but perhaps a sign that we have touched a nerve," he said, smiling.

Even though the United States, China and Russia

refused to sign the pact, those countries moved in the direction of Ottawa treaty, Canadian officials said.

The United States increased its financial assistance for mine removal, for example, and China announced it would restrict its mine exports. At one point Russian President Boris Yeltsin seemed prepared to sign on, but then backed down.

Canada has already indicated that it wants to push beyond a mere landmine ban, moving to what it is calling the "Ottawa Process II," which will focus on mine-clearing and helping mine blast victims.

"The hardest work begins in December," said Mr. Axworthy. "This will require a degree of co-ordination unusual for governments and (non-governmental organisations) that normally jealously guard their independence of action and sovereignty."

The Ottawa treaty is formally called the "Convention on the prohibition of the use, stockpiling, production and transfer of anti-personnel mines and on their destruction."

The treaty requires the destruction of existing stocks within four years of the signing of the convention, and mandates the clearing of all minefields within 10 years.

Bushfires burning out of control in Australia

SYDNEY (AFP) — The Australian army was called in Sunday to help fight nearly a hundred bushfires raging out of control in New South Wales state and fanned by 70 kilometre per hour winds.

Rural Fire Service spokeswoman Gilly Paxton said the single largest blaze had destroyed 40,000 hectares of bushland.

A further 60 blazes were being contained but fires across the state were expected to continue for many days, she said.

Residents of the tiny town of Frogmore lost their municipal hall and an historic cottage to bushfires Saturday night in the first property losses of the season.

Authorities warned Sunday that more than 70,000 volunteers were likely to be called on to fight fires during the summer, already showing signs of being one of the hottest on record.

Conditions are now considered ripe for a repeat of the 1994 fires that killed four people and destroyed hundreds of homes in the Sydney suburbs.

Rural Fire Service Commissioner Phil Koperberg said Saturday night that the army had been asked for earth-moving equipment and some heavy water tankers.

"The fire has broken through all containment lines," he said.

"The winds have been increasing in velocity throughout the evening and there's been no rain but plenty of lightning strikes associated with the southerly change."

Water bombing was continuing in the Hunter Valley area northwest of Sydney, especially in the Goulburn River National Park where fires remained very active, and in the Blue Mountains to the west where fires flared up overnight.

Mr. Koperberg said 36 aircraft would be used to fight fires Sunday, with about half equipped to water-bomb the worst of the blazes, including some in otherwise inaccessible areas.

Taiwan KMT mayor calls for soul-searching after election rout

TAIPEI (AFP) — Outspoken Kaohsiung Mayor Wu Tung-Yi Sunday urged the leadership of the ruling Kuomintang (KMT) to do some serious soul-searching after the party's worst election defeat on record.

"Some people were so proud after winning the presidential race in March last year and thought the whole country was under their command," Mr. Wu told reporters without naming names.

But the political situation had changed amid deteriorating social order and the KMT's decision to downsize the provincial govern-

ment, which had sparked widespread discontent and factional fights in the party, he said.

"We have lost the race to our own people," he said, adding many KMT members had insisted on standing in Saturday's local elections without party approval.

Mr. Wu from the southern city of Kaohsiung is one of the few younger KMT leaders who have dared to challenge the policies of party chairman, President Lee Teng-hui.

He urged the KMT leadership to take the election defeat seriously.

"If they believed the elec-

tion was just a contest at lower government level which would not jeopardise the stability of the KMT's central government, then we have just seen the first domino fall and the impact cannot be estimated," he said.

For the first time in its 50 years control over the island, the KMT lost the majority to the opposition in Saturday's elections for county magistrates and city mayors.

The Democratic Progressive Party won 12 of the 23 constituencies while the KMT got only eight, a loss of eight seats. Three posts were taken by independents.

World
Australian
PM calls
for land
rights
solution

SYDNEY (AFP) — Australian Prime Minister John Howard Sunday used his first public address to the nation to call for a speedy resolution to the bitter row over Aboriginal land rights.

"I think we all agree on one thing, and that is the sooner we get this debate over and get the whole issue behind us, the better for all of us," he said in the nationally televised speech.

Native title has been one of the most vexing issues of the last decade since he came to power in March last year and attempted to push through a legislative response to Aboriginal rights outlined in the High Court's Wik ruling.

The bill will largely, but not totally, reverse the Wik decision which ruled that the pastoral leases governing nearly 40 per cent of Australia did not extinguish native title and that the two could coexist.

Mr. Howard's anxiousness to resolve the native title issue quickly is widely seen here as part of a move to "clear the decks" ahead of an election expected next year which opinion polls indicate he would lose if it were held now.

In his address, Mr. Howard expressed his support for both the Aboriginal community and the mining and pastoral sectors — all of whom have opposed the government's legislation and demanded more radical solution.

Describing his plan as a fair and appropriate balance, Mr. Howard said aborigines would be compensated for any rights that were diminished.

The Labour opposition originally said it would block the government's native title legislation in the Upper House Senate, a move which could have forced a deeply divisive election to be fought over the issue of race.

A senior member of the ruling coalition Ron Boswell said Sunday that an election over native title could still be held if the bill was watered down in the Senate, where Labour has now proposed hundreds of amendments.

"If we had to go to an election on this issue it would be terrible," he said in a television interview Sunday.

Earlier, the centrist Australian Democrats' native title spokesman John Howden called on Mr. Howard to use the address to apologise for "scare-mongering about the potential for Aborigines to claim family homes."

"I don't speak in the name of representatives of the people," he said, adding he was "panicking."

Mr. Howden told national radio.

"I think Australians could like him to say 'I apologise for the scare-mongering of Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer ... saying that Australian backyard were at risk from native title.'"

Church leaders Sunday increased pressure on the government over native title by launching the first national prayer day for indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

It was organised several weeks ago after church leaders expressed concern about the collapse of the reconciliation process.

Mr. Howard has lashed out to his vocal critics over his native title legislation, while one of his ministers went as far as to call for a rural boycott of church ser-

Australian PM calls for land rights solution

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Earlier, the centrist Australian Democrats' native title spokesman John Woodley called on Mr. Howard to use the address to apologise for "scaremongering" about the potential for Aborigines to claim family homes.

"He didn't speak in the House of Representatives so we wonder why at this stage he's panicking," Mr. Woodley told national radio.

"I think Australians would like him to say 'I apologise for the scare tactics of (Deputy Prime Minister) Tim Fischer ... saying that Australian backyards were at risk from native title.'"

Church leaders Sunday increased pressure on the government over native title by launching the first national prayer day for reconciliation between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

It was organised several weeks ago after church leaders expressed concern about the collapse of the reconciliation process.

Mr. Howard has lashed churches over their vocal opposition to his native title legislation, while one of his ministers went as far as to call for a rural boycott of church services.

Havel says Czech government should quit, Klaus clings on

PRAGUE (R) — President Vaclav Havel called Saturday for the beleaguered Czech government, torn apart by protests over a party financing scandal, to step down after Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus defied calls for him to quit.

But as Mr. Klaus fought for his political life in a tense meeting with leaders of his Civic Democratic Party (ODS), a crowd of some 500 staged a noisy demonstration in his support. Mr. Havel said in a statement read on Czech Radio after the resignation of eight of the 16 cabinet ministers that the only sensible way forward was for the entire government to go.

But Mr. Havel, who cannot force out the government, said the three partners in the current centre-right coalition should try to form a new administration and that he had invited their leaders to talks on the issue Sunday.

"I believe that in the given situation, which I think is serious, the only fully sensible resolution would be for the government as a whole, with its chairman in the lead, to hand in its resignation as soon as possible," he said.

However, Mr. Klaus's supporters were in no mood to let him be removed from office quietly.

"We believe in Klaus" and "this was a putsch" were among the shouts until Mr. Klaus emerged from the building to urge the crowd to be quiet.

"Thank you for your kind words. I appreciate it but it is starting to become counterproductive with the shouting," he told the supporters.

Earlier he said he was doing his utmost to resolve the situation in the best possible way.

When ODS deputy chairman and Finance Minister Ivan Filip appeared at an open ground floor window, one protester threw what appeared to be a cola over him.

Mr. Filip, who called Friday for Mr. Klaus to resign over the scandal concerning donations to the party, barely flinched.

"This is not the ODS, this is not the Czech Republic," he told reporters.

Former Interior Minister Jan Ruml, who remains a very influential voice in the party, stormed out of the building, clearly angered by the noisy protests.

"I didn't fight against Communism for this," he said.

However, the current government is effectively dead.

One junior partner, the Christian Democrats, withdrew from the government Friday and the Civic Democratic Alliance's (ODA) ministers decided Saturday that they would also quit.

Mr. Klaus, who earlier flew back from a visit to Sarajevo, told reporters he would draw clear conclusions from recent events but would not resign immediately.

He said he was not "blind and deaf" to what had happened — moves condemned by his backers as a palace coup.

"Of course I will draw clear, understandable conclusions from what is going on here. Under no circumstances will I accept calls for resignations that I didn't know a word about, nor



Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus speaks to the press shortly after his arrival at Prague airport from Sarajevo (AFP photo)

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"Of course I will draw clear, understandable conclusions from what is going on here. Under no circumstances will I accept calls for resignations that I didn't know a word about, nor

because this or that coalition member wishes it," he said.

The row erupted over accusations that the ODS, which dominated the coalition, improperly accepted donations in 1995 of 7.5 million crowns (\$217,000) which critics say may have influenced privatisation decisions.

Mr. Klaus, the longest serving prime minister in post-Communist Europe after more than five years in power, has said he did not know the origin of the money and it did not affect privatisations.

Mr. Klaus said he would not allow all blame for the affair to be shifted on to one person.

The coalition, which controls 100 seats in the 200-member parliament, had been unstable since inconclusive parliamentary polls last year and lost its reputation for competence as it struggled with a severe economic downturn.

Mr. Klaus was long seen as the champion of reform in the Czech Republic, regarded among the leaders of post-Communist transformation in Eastern Europe.

But Czech markets and the crown currency have suffered badly from the weeks of political turmoil.

Taleban call for return of renegade commanders

ISLAMABAD (R) — Afghanistan's Taleban authorities Sunday called for two opposition commanders it accuses of killing Taleban prisoners to be returned to Afghanistan from Iran.

The Islamic Taleban, which controls two-thirds of the country including the capital Kabul, accuse General Abdul Malik and his brother General Gul Mohammed of killing as many as 2,000 Taleban fighters after they were captured in fighting in and around the northern Afghan city of Mazar-i-Sharif, the opposition capital, last May.

General Abdul Malik and General Gul Mohammed are two killers. Because of this we want them to be returned to the Islamic emirate of Afghanistan from Iran, and I want the U.N. to play its due role in this," the Pakistan-based private news agency Afghan Islamic Press quoted Taleban leader Mullah Mohammed Omar as saying.

Gen. Malik and his brother defected to the Taleban briefly in May, and the combined force managed to take Mazar-i-Sharif from opposition commander General Abdul Rashid Dostum.

But the alliance between Gen. Malik and the Taleban went sour and Gen. Malik's forces turned on the Taleban, killing hundreds of their fighters and capturing thousands more.

During the short honeymoon, the Taleban sent thousands of men into Mazar-i-Sharif, and it is these men who Mr. Omar said were killed.

"They martyred thousands of Taleban who were sent to them under an agreement," Mr. Omar is reported to have said.

Gen. Dostum returned in force to the north of Afghanistan in September and has driven Gen. Malik and his brother from the country.

Last week Gen. Dostum showed the United Nations and reporters mass graves outside the northern Afghan town of Shibargan which he said contained the bodies of some of the Taleban fighters.

Gen. Dostum also accused Gen. Malik of being behind the killings.

Mr. Omar also said that the mainly Shiite Muslim Hezb-i-Wahadat opposition party was involved in the killings.

"Besides General Abdul Malik and General Gul Mohammed, Hezb-i-Wahadat was also involved in the massacre in Shibargan," he said.

Mr. Omar also criticised the United Nations for not doing enough to stop the massacre, saying that they had been warned of what was happening in the north.

"Several times we complained to the United Nations that our prisoners were being killed there (in the north) but it did not take any step," he said.

He said the Taleban wished to prosecute and punish the killers.

India's BJP seeks to split Congress to win power

NEW DELHI (R) — India's Hindu nationalists Sunday pinned their hopes on a split in the faction-ridden Congress Party to propel them into power.

The Bharatiya Janata Party, which survived as a government for just 12 days last year, is now banking on luring away discontented Congress deputies to reach a simple majority in the country's fragmented parliament.

"We believe that a government led by Atal Behari Vajpayee (BJP leader) is the only option, and for that to happen, the Congress has to split. This is the bottom line," George Fernandes of the Samta Party, a BJP ally, told Reuters.

President K.R. Narayanan invited the BJP and its allies for consultations Sunday evening as he considered whether to open the way for fresh elections or offer a

chance to political groups to try their hand at government-making.

Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral's United Front coalition — which includes free-marketters, Communists, and regional parties — resigned from government Friday after its key ally, the Congress Party, cut off support.

Congress immediately staked its claim to power. But, like the BJP, it is short of lawmakers for a majority in the Lower House of Parliament.

Neither Congress, with 138 deputies, nor the BJP, with 162, could win a vote of confidence without support from other groups in the 545-seat Lok Sabha, or lower house of parliament.

"The Congress is dividing itself, the only reason their leaders have staked a claim is to hold the flock together," said Surjit Singh Barnala, leader of the regional Akali Dal, another BJP ally.

Last month, the Congress split in the most populous Uttar Pradesh state, enabling a BJP government to win a confidence vote.

That split has sparked hopes in the BJP of repeating the coup at federal level.

"It is no secret that Congress deputies are ready to jump out, they see no future in that party," Mr. Barnala said.

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Danger in going it alone

THE CONTINUED U.S. military build-up in the Gulf even after an accord was reached between the U.N. and Iraq allowing for effective international inspection of suspected Iraqi mass destruction weapon sites suggests that Washington's agenda indeed goes beyond implementing pertinent Security Council resolutions. After an initial welcome of Russia's intervention to save the day for both the U.N. Security Council and Iraq, the U.S. seems to be still determined to pursue its expanded agenda for Iraq, which might well include overthrowing the regime in Baghdad. There can be no better explanation for continuing U.S. military moves in the Gulf unless of course we believe in the need to exert maximum pressure, even using the threat of using force, to make Iraq do exactly what the Americans want it to do. The barrage of attack on the Russian-brokered deal had started early on, anyway, when Sandy Berger, President Bill Clinton's adviser on national security affairs, disassociated his country from any agreement that Moscow was able to reach with Baghdad and threatened to use the U.S. veto power in the Security Council to frustrate the deal. The U.S. secretary of defence, William Cohen, followed suit and unleashed another attack on Iraq's understanding with the Russian Federation by suggesting that any such deal was not binding on Washington.

The first casualty of these attacks was obviously the unity of the U.N. on how to deal with Iraq. Despite the U.S. efforts to speak on behalf of a united coalition of powers composed basically of the five permanent members of the council, it has become increasingly clear that it was Washington which has become isolated and effectively forfeited any pretence to speak on behalf of the international community. Any military strike by the U.S. against Iraq would thus have all the hallmarks of a unilateral action that does not enjoy the wide support of the permanent members of the council, much less the General Assembly. The U.S. clearly aims to be the sole power which calls the shots in the area and on this basis any intervention by Russia would be viewed as unacceptable.

This renewed rivalry between the two countries does not augur well for a settlement in the Gulf region. The U.S. is therefore called upon to readjust its priorities in the Middle East and above all the way it perceives issues in this part of the world and elsewhere.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Ra'i's Abdul Rahim Malhas Sunday urged the new Parliament to prioritise the issue of Jordan receiving an annual \$100 million from the U.S. via Israel. Jordan is a sovereign state and should refuse to deal with Washington through a third party, said Dr. Malhas, a former minister of health. According to the writer, such a process would be a humiliation for the Kingdom. It is true that Jordan, driven by its desire to reach a comprehensive settlement to the Middle East conflict, has participated in the Madrid conference and eventually signed the Wadi Araba treaty, but this does not mean that it must accept humiliation, he said. Dr. Malhas said Jordan should reject the American condition that it can receive the \$100 million in annual aid only after Israel's consent and should make it clear that its self respect and dignity must be safeguarded. It is also humiliating to see only those products manufactured in Jordan jointly with the Israeli firms in the Irbid area can find their way to American markets, he said. Jordan should demand that all its products are guaranteed access to the U.S. without having to secure the approval of the Jewish state, Dr. Malhas said.

Al Dustour's Oreib Rintawi addressed the Iraqi-U.S. crisis describing it as far from over following the U.S. rejection of an Iraqi offer to allow representatives of the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council to search Saddam's places as well as other sensitive installations in Iraq, Russia and France, which have earlier seemed sympathetic with Iraq's offer, have now altered their stand and demanded that the Iraqis succumb to all U.N. demands without any condition and without changing the original agreement on the inspection teams work, the writer said. He said that in view of the present situation, the U.S. is continuing to escalate tension by threatening a military strike on Iraq. The Russians who succeeded in defusing the earlier crisis when the U.S. inspectors were not allowed into Iraq, is expected once again to intervene and force the Iraqis to be flexible and to accept the U.N. mandate without any new terms, according to the writer. He said the Iraqis must not lose the sympathy that it succeeded in gaining for its position from the Arab states and major world powers like Russia, France and China which stood firm in the face of further U.S. military strikes against it, and should display further flexibility and win further support for its case from the world community.

Economic Review

Towards a new system of intellectual property rights

By Dr. Yusuf Mansur

AMID ACCUSATIONS launched by the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PHRMA) against Jordanian pharmaceutical manufacturers for brand piracy and increased piracy resulting in millions of dollars in losses to PHRMA members, the ever-brilliant and humane economist from MIT Lester Thurow wrote an article in the Harvard Business Review that is a breath of fresh air that sheds new light on the whole topic of intellectual property rights. The article questions whether a new system of intellectual property rights is needed and presents several reasons why discarding the old system of granting monopoly rights to intellectual property has become necessary.

Not in defence of brand piracy, and not in attack of intellectual property rights, but merely in search of enlightenment and what is best for Jordan, herein are some of the ideas of the article.

Jordan has 12 pharmaceutical manufacturing companies that produce a total of \$140 million of drugs satisfying one-third of the needs of the Jordanian market and exporting more than half of their output to the rest of the world. Most markets are in the Middle East-North Africa region and go to countries where incomes are usually lower than those in the European Union or the U.S. Their drugs are usually not earth-shattering discoveries, the licences on many of the medical items they produce are usually expired or about to expire. Of course, they spend very little on research and development with most of the research being focused on maintaining the stability of the drugs they formulate from components. But to claim that they are costing the members of PHRMA millions of dollars yearly is an overstatement of the problem.

In the U.S. the cost of producing a new drug is approx-

imately \$500 million, with most of the cost going to research and the researchers. To say that Jordanian manufacturers would be able to compete in this area would be somewhat forgetful that the whole GDP of Jordan is \$6.75 billion, which means that if the whole country diverts all its resources with man, woman and child starved and saving everything they earn to manufacture pharmaceuticals, and assuming that Jordan would have the necessary expertise — which it does not presently have and needs time to cultivate — it would be able to produce just over 13 new drugs. In addition, Jordanians spend on pharmaceuticals approximately 2.5 per cent of their income while Americans spend 0.75 per cent, almost one-fourth of what Jordanians spend in relative terms. More stringent intellectual property rights would raise costs and ultimately prices to the consumer. Immediate compliance with the intellectual property rights as seen by PHRMA would be completely insensitive to the fact that developing is different from developed.

Lester Thurow gave several reasons why the old system of intellectual property rights does not work. First, information has become a central requirement for maintaining a competitive advantage, and thus intellectual property has come to play a far more important role than it did in the past: it is the primary cause for the success or failure of a modern economy. Second, public knowledge has been declining and more and more knowledge is becoming private. Public sector funding for research and development has been on the decline, and there is a growing protectionism over intellectual property in the West, especially since there is a significant degree of monopoly in the West in the knowledge market. With the death of public knowledge researchers who need to know

have to reinvent the wheel almost at every turn, and progress will be made at a very slow pace and indeed at a very high price regardless of the stage of development. Thirdly, new technologies are emerging where it is hard to apply the old patent systems. Electronic mail has changed the face of publishing and genetic engineering brings to focus issues such as ownership of human parts by the patent holder. Both enforcement and patentability have become questionable, if not tougher. Fourth, with the globalisation of the economy countries that are trying to catch up have different needs from countries trying to stay ahead. The U.S. system of intellectual property rights cannot be grafted onto every nation's economy. Any such attempts would be temporary and would be disillusioned.

Clearly, a new system for intellectual property rights is needed; and it must take into consideration all the above. Jordan, like most developing countries is revising its intellectual property rights legislation and making it consistent with those of the World Intellectual Property Rights Organisation (WIPO) and the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS) of the World Trade Organisation. Commitments to change have already been made in the EU-Jordan Free Trade Agreement, and they should not be implemented a day sooner. In order for change to be worthwhile, it needs time. Members of PHRMA who have been unable to raise profits in the last couple of years should not seek to hully world market dialogue and trust building measures that are based on cooperation to create goodwill and better, larger markets in the long run; on the other hand, bully tactics are bad medicine.

Strategies of hope

By Edward W. Said

CERTAINLY THE list of negatives against Oslo is a long one, and as we reflect on it during the fourth anniversary of the signing ceremony in Washington, the horrendous balance sheet makes it almost impossible to understand why so many Arab and Western leaders keep referring to it with such enthusiasm. But in the wake of Benjamin Netanyahu's reign, his scorched earth policies which have in fact delivered up a landscape of singular bleakness even when compared with Oslo's intended devastations.

Yet enough has been said about economic, social, and political deprivations for Palestinians during the past four years (all of them attributable to the Oslo peace process) without sufficient attention paid to the human factor, surely the most important. For in the age of globalised capital and the triumph of the theoretical market model, most analysts tend to reproduce one of the ideological correlatives of this triumph which, I believe, is the conviction that there is no alternative to it. If you think that only the IMF, the World Bank and market economics, which favour the wealthiest transnationals and countries, count in the world today, and that more equitable distribution and social justice are sentimentalised aspects of socialism's defeat, then you will also be condemned to think that there is no alternative but to compete in the market. Individual will and energy recede in importance, while the sheer power of market economies seems to dominate every individual everywhere.

So it has been with Oslo, which has been a triumph for the powerful, in which Israel and the United States have convinced Palestinians and others that what has taken place since 1993 is not only the best, but the single remaining solution to our extremely grave problems. So the attitude today is "let us get Oslo back on track, since anything else is unthinkable."

At such a juncture it becomes evident that Oslo's greatest expense for the Palestinians has been the loss of faith in what I called above the human factor. We need to remind ourselves that political struggles are always contests of will, in which one side attempts to persuade the other side to give up, to lose the will to resist and fight on. This is not a military but a political and moral matter. I therefore think that the task for Palestinian intellectuals today is the reactivation of the will and, just as important, to revive belief in the possibility that what human beings do can make a difference. The tragedy of suicide missions is that they stem from hopelessness; they cannot be part of a programme for national revival since what they promote is negation for its own sake. The problem with the present impasse is not that U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and the U.S. are unwilling to pressure Israel enough but the leadership is caught up mainly in the effort to survive, not in the effort to mobilise as many Palestinians as possible to resist what Israel, in its arrogance and blind heedlessness, is trying to do to us as a people. This attempt at survival is understandable but insufficient as the core Palestinian strategy since the good of the many, the good of the nation, is of far more significance than the well-being of a few. So what then are the imperatives?

Some of them are obvious and scarcely need insistence here. Sumud is crucial, as is the building of civil institutions by and for Palestinians, quite independently of what the Palestinian Authority may or may not have in mind. For we have a tendency to think only in literal terms, not sufficiently in symbolic or moral ones. The greatest victory of Zionism has been a sustained one for a whole century: to persuade Jews and others that "a return" to an empty land is the proper, indeed the only solution for the afflictions of genocide and anti-Semitism. What has been totally lost in this project of course is the exorbitant price paid by

Palestinians who, as invisible, silent, or mainly irrational and violent "lesser" beings have all along been considered sacrificeable to the grand Zionist fulfillment. After spending many years living, studying and being active in the struggle for Palestinian rights I am more convinced than ever that we have totally neglected the effort — the human effort — required to demonstrate to the world the immorality of what was done to us; this, I now think, is the essential task facing us as a people now. Unless we mobilise ourselves and our friends and, above all, our voices so that the Zionist project can systematically be shown for what it is and was, we can never expect any change in our status as an inferior and dominated people. Even as Arafat and his men try to unsuccessfully deal with Israel's actions they seem to have forgotten that no voice (voices) speaks for the suffering of the Palestinians, no effort is made to record systematically the wrong we suffer, no energy is expended on trying to organise our various expatriate communities so that they can undertake the task of dramatising and finally defeating the legitimacy of the plan to take the whole of Palestine, every significant inch of our land, every aspect of our past as a people, every possibility of self-determination in the future. For at bottom our struggle with Zionism must be won first on the moral level, and then can be fought in negotiations from a position of moral strength, given that militarily and economically we will always be weaker than Israel and its supporters.

The importance of this was first borne out for me when I visited South Africa in May 1991. Nelson Mandela had already been released, exile leaders of the ANC had been repatriated, and the stage was set for the huge political transformation that was to ensue with democratic elections four years later, and the victory of the "one person, one vote" programme of the ANC. When I was there I visited the ANC's headquarters in downtown Johannesburg; a few scant weeks before the organisation was considered terrorist, and no legitimacy at all attached to it. I was stunned by the complete reversal. Speaking to Walter Sisulu, who had been exiled for almost 30 years and was second only to Mandela in authority and prestige, I asked him how the transformation had been possible. What exactly did the ANC do to turn defeat into victory? "You must remember," he said, "that during the eighties we were beaten in South Africa; the organization was wrecked by the police, our bases in neighbouring countries were routinely attacked by the South African army, our leaders were in jail or in exile or killed. We then realised that our only hope was to concentrate on the international area, and there to delegitimise apartheid. We organised in every major Western city; we initiated committees, we prodded the media, we held meetings and demonstrations, not once or twice but thousands of times. We organized university campuses, and churches, and labour unions, and business people, and professional groups." He paused for a moment and then said something that I shall never forget as long as I live. "Every victory that we registered in London, Glasgow, or Iowa City, or Toulouse, or Berlin, or Stockholm gave the people at home a sense of hope, and renewed their determination not to give up the struggle. In time we morally isolated the South African regime and its policy of apartheid so that even though militarily we could not do much to hurt them, in the end they came to us, asking for negotiations. We never changed or retreated from our basic programme, our central demand: one person, one vote."

Let me add one footnote to this. On the basis of my South African experience I organised a seminar in London for every leading Palestinian activist-intellectual that I knew, including a few who have since become ministers in Arafat's government. I invited the ANC ambassador in England,

whom I had met in Mandela's office and was on the same plane with me out of Johannesburg, to address one of our sessions, and he gladly accepted. The idea was to impress on everyone, a mere matter of weeks before Madrid, that we should all tirelessly focus on the same facts about what had happened to us as a people, and should not get deflected in discussions about policy and grand negotiating tactics with the Israelis and the U.S. and so lose sight of the political-moral goal of isolating the Israeli occupation and delegitimising it all over, as the result of a carefully organised mass movement in Europe, North America, the Arab World, and elsewhere. There was some resistance to listening to the ANC representative talk about his experiences: "South Africa is a different case," said a distinguished young Palestinian political scientist who thought we should be addressing Oxford or Harvard experts behind closed doors, not wasting our time trying to create a grass roots movement of support for Palestinian human rights. I remember saying that we should always make it a point to be as concrete as possible — to talk about daily life under Israeli occupation, to talk about the humiliation of checkpoints, of how our houses were blown up, and how our trees were uprooted — and not to talk to audiences as if we were negotiating theoretical issues. All in all I and my co-organisers of the seminar felt that we had made some progress. But the moment Madrid gave us the opportunity to appear in public we all started to speak like James Baker, forgetting that our status had more weight as representatives of a moral cause than as members of a diplomatic delegation. And of course the goal changed, so much so that in the Oslo negotiations and in the period after them we forgot not just our values but our own history.

I am convinced that we have no recourse now but to return to the discourse of the oppressed and use what Netanyahu is now doing to us as an initiative to put his policies in direct contact with the history of Zionist policies towards the Palestinians. After all he speaks from a straight line of descent from what every major Zionist theoretician has declared: that Jews have a superior right to Palestine despite the presence and existence of Palestinians. We must not only contest what is now being done to us, but also take our moral presence directly into the Israeli and Western, and even Arab, consciousness. Zionism's original sin was to have dispossessed us, and what the Likud now does is what Labour had done before it, to continue the original dispossession under the guise of "peace" and "security." But this confrontation cannot be undertaken by individuals acting alone; it must be a job of organising and then implementing such a plan by the worldwide community of Palestinians. Arafat and his coterie have never understood this. They have always supposed that if they could get to the president or secretary of state, even of various prominent Jewish leaders in the United States, these influential people could be persuaded to do "something" for the Palestinians. I have always refused the premise that what we demand as a people ought to be conceded to us charitably, or in bits and pieces as a reward for our good behaviour. This is to diminish ourselves and what we stand for, since our position as a dispossessed people is morally unassailable. So it is therefore evident that each Palestinian community must organise itself so as to intervene in the public discussion now taking place on a worldwide scale about the conflict between us and those Israelis who support Netanyahu. But even that supposed majority of Israelis who say in polls that they are for peace have to be recalled to our reality, which is that of a people whose land was taken so that Israel could be built.

I am not at all saying that we should advocate the destruction of Israel, nor the dispossession of Israelis. Our movement

gains its moral stature by its humane dimensions, its sincere willingness for coexistence, its firm belief in respecting the rights of others. What I am talking about is a new peace initiative designed over a long period of time to bring parity between us and the Israelis, who so far overpower us now as to make the moral dimension our only field of struggle. We must show Israel and its supporters that only a full acknowledgement by them of what was done to us can bring peace and reconciliation. To do this, therefore, we must have a policy of concrete detail, not one of broad abstract statements that are not fully engaged in the struggle for opinion. It would be good, for example, to remind readers of journalistic articles that various sites in Israel were once Arab from which their original inhabitants were expelled. Thus in a recent profile of Anatoli Scharansky by David Remnick in The New Yorker magazine, Remnick mentions casually that the Soviet activist now resides in Qatana, "an old quarter in West Jerusalem," without saying to his readers that it was an Arab quarter emptied of its inhabitants by force in the early months of 1948. Similarly, when Albright cites her appreciation of "Palestinian suffering" we should be challenging her to do the arithmetic in public: how many Palestinians need to suffer and for how long and in what way for Israel's security anxieties to be allayed? Or yet again, in a recent issue of the New York Times Sunday magazine which contained a profile of Jibril Rajoub by Jonathan Goldberg, who admits to have served in the Israeli army, we should be publicly challenging the appropriateness of an ex-Israeli soldier to write fairly of a Palestinian activist. The examples can be multiplied infinitely, but all of them rest on one assumption: that, as a people, we carry a full-scale moral argument that has never been fully heard or taken into account. What we ask for is acknowledgement, not destruction, equality, not subordination. I think also that we must always be very clear in our understanding of Jewish suffering and in making it apparent that what binds us together is a common history of persecution, which must be shown not to be the exclusive possession of the Jewish people.

Only by raising our voices in concert and registering moral victories can we then further encourage and empower our compatriots in Palestine or in the various refugee camps in the Arab World. We should be voices of courage and honesty both of them credibly connected to an ongoing effort to gain self-determination for the Palestinian people. I know that sceptics will say that words are not as effective as deeds, and that only the experience of facing Israeli settlers on the land is what counts. But that, I think, is sadly to miss the moral dimension that must be expounded on wherever there are people to listen and unjust power to engage them directly. The greatest victories of Zionism were not simply that they had better armies than we did, but that they had organised opinion to accept and even support the idea that settling Palestine with incoming Jews was a morally positive idea.

We must now undertake the same labourous task, first of delegitimising Israel's military and colonial policy in Gaza and the West Bank, then of giving our quest for self-determination the authority it still lacks. We should be prepared to ask academics and professionals to boycott visits to Israel unless they make an effort to visit and support Palestinian universities and institutes; we should also be mounting a campaign to ensure that tourists to Israel who think of it only as an "interesting place" should begin to see it as a land where two peoples must live together peacefully and equally but now do not. In other words, what we now have before us is a commitment that far exceeds anything that Oslo either foresaw or promised, and if we do not take up the challenge I fear that we will be the very compromised and much impoverished permanent losers.

Feature
 Foreign

Following are a series of articles from the Middle East section of the Jordan Times, published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. The articles are written by Dr. Yusuf Mansur, a prominent Jordanian economist and public intellectual.

Middle East
 The Middle East is a region of great strategic importance. It is a region where the interests of the major powers of the world converge. It is a region where the future of the world is being shaped. It is a region where the people are suffering from the consequences of the actions of the major powers. It is a region where the people are being treated as pawns in a game of power. It is a region where the people are being denied their basic rights. It is a region where the people are being oppressed. It is a region where the people are being exploited. It is a region where the people are being treated as second-class citizens. It is a region where the people are being treated as inferior. It is a region where the people are being treated as less than human. It is a region where the people are being treated as property. It is a region where the people are being treated as slaves. It is a region where the people are being treated as beasts. 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Foreign Office minister says Britain can play major role in Middle East

Following are excerpts from a speech presented by British Foreign Office Minister of State Derek Fatchen, to the Washington Institute for Near East Policy on Wednesday, Nov. 26, 1997

BRITISH POLICY towards the Middle East has become a subject of fresh interest following the election of the new government in the United Kingdom. Newness in itself is inevitably a cause of interest. But there are other reasons why suddenly Britain's policy pronouncements about the Middle East have assumed a greater relevance. In particular two reasons immediately spring to mind: First, Britain's Presidency of the European Union from January next year, and secondly, the growing strength of the relationship between the Administration here in Washington and that in the United Kingdom, as we have seen so vividly during recent events in the Middle East. Indeed the past few weeks have shown the clear benefit of cooperation between our two countries to uphold international principles that we both share. These two reasons, our EU presidency and our relationship with the U.S., reinforce one another. We shall use both to the full.

I make no apologies for concentrating on the Middle East peace process. Almost all roads in the Middle East seem to lead back to the Arab/Israeli question. During the recent crisis with Iraq I have heard suggestions that Arab attitudes on matters of deep importance to the West — avoiding proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, containing threats to Middle East stability, countering terrorism — have been affected by the stagnation of the peace process. These suggestions are too important to be ignored.

Middle East Peace Process

I vividly recall less than two years ago being an observer in the very first elections for the Palestinian National Authority. It was a day of genuine excitement and hope: there was a feeling in the air that a new Middle East was about to be born. Those hopes sadly are no longer so vivid. But the simple fact is that politicians, diplomats and all interested parties must not allow the Middle East to slip back into a condition of no-hope and alienation. As politicians we have to look forward to the substantial prizes which could be achieved as a result of a lasting Middle East peace.

You do not need to be an economist to understand that the Middle East, an area rich in natural resources and with a highly skilled entrepreneurial population has failed to perform anywhere near its full potential. Look at the performance over the last decade of regions such as Southeast Asia and you then see the underperformance of the Middle East. This relative economic failure caused by the lack of political will and vision means that literally thousands of people are condemned to poverty in an area in which resources and skills abound. The social problems which are created feed the political extremism and terrorism which make a political settlement that much more difficult; the spiral will continue to move downwards unless politicians of all persuasions can show a vision and statesmanship to lift the hopes and expectations of their people.

Perhaps I could look for inspiration not from a politician but from the mother of a teenage Israeli girl killed in the July bombing in Jerusalem. The mother Nurit Peled-Elchanan, said: "When you put people under a border closure, when you humiliate, starve and suppress them, when you raze their villages and demolish houses, when they grow up in garbage and in holding-pens, that's what happens." Such willingness to forgive at a time when human nature virtually invites hatred is both moving and inspiring: an indication that if the politicians can get it right, ordinary people will not find it too difficult to live together.

The bereaved mother's words which I have just quoted graphically sum up the nub of the Middle East problem. In the short term, Israel's security demands firm action against terrorism, but long term security requires a lasting peace that delivers prosperity and justice to the Palestinians.

Britain's Role

So what can we do? How can outsiders help? The UK government firmly believes that there is no alternative to making the original Oslo deal stick. The logic of Oslo holds: You have to create trust by interim steps, and then you have to move on to the most difficult issues. You have to refrain from unilateral actions that destroy trust.

Equally, you have to create a favourable regional environment, moving forward on all tracks simultaneously and thus facilitating normalisation between Arabs and Israelis generally.

Oslo, backed by the Madrid framework, was working, albeit in fits and starts. It will not work, however while either party is trying to rewrite the deal. Nobody would seek to deny that the deal was already a compromise with gains and losses on both sides: If you pick out the pieces you do not like in the name of whatever excuse or reason, the whole deal then begins to come apart. Then the broader risks are obvious. Moderate leaders like King Hussein of Jordan are undermined whilst extremist voices become more prevalent on the streets of Arab capitals.

Britain counts itself as a friend of both the Israelis and the Palestinians. The real test of friendship is to tell your friends when you think they are on the wrong track. And at the moment our message to our friends is clear. We are saying to the Israelis: implement the interim agreement; redeploy in line with the Hebron Agreement; freeze settlements and stop trying to squeeze the Palestinians out of Jerusalem; then move on to the final status negotiations — don't free-wheel into an impasse.

At the same time we are saying to the Palestinians, while we believe that you are making an effort on security, you need to try even harder — there is after all a Palestinian interest in Israeli security.

The European Union has proposed a Permanent Security Committee and U.S. and EU participation to monitor compliance. It must be in the Israelis' interest that outsiders can bear witness to the alleged shortcomings and take them up with the Palestinians. And it must be in the Palestinians' interest for outsiders to bear witness to the efforts which they are making: a structure along these lines could make a contribution to Israeli/Palestinian security.

Since taking office in May the new British government has constantly been asked whether as a country with long standing interests in the Middle East and with the EU presidency starting in January next year, the United Kingdom plans to take some major Middle East initiative. A flattering question, perhaps. We fully realise however that the interest in our intentions reflects partly frustration with progress in the peace process and partly a desire to introduce some form of competitive bidding between the roles played by the United States and Europe.

We have therefore responded with caution to all the seductive suggestions that the U.K. can make unilaterally a grand event-changing gesture. We are wise enough to know that any such gesture would most likely be counter-productive. The siren voices have nevertheless made us think even more deeply about our role and that of the European Union in the Middle East peace process.

We have most certainly concluded that one of our priority tasks for the EU presidency will be to establish a closer working partnership with the United States administration. The role must clearly be complementary not competitive. For us, getting the process right with the United States is important. It also helps that views are already very close and all the Europeans agree that the American efforts must be fully supported. But it will be crucial for those efforts to be sustained, as they are being now, if we are to avoid regression and failure.

Europe can bring a lot to the peace process. Not only finance, though that is important. The EU already provides 69 per cent of the international donor efforts to the Palestinians and takes around a third of Israeli exports. In addition to money the EU is providing expertise and equipment to the Palestinians to help the counter-terrorism effort. We are therefore already active players, trusted on all

sides, with a contribution to make.

In addition, in a short time the EU special envoy, Ambassador Miguel Moratinos, has succeeded in winning the trust of both the Israelis and Palestinians. He has also worked closely and successfully with Dennis Ross (U.S. special envoy to the Middle East). The role of the EU's special envoy can and should be strengthened: building upon the established confidence and playing a vital role in complementing on a day-to-day basis United States' activity.

Britain, and the EU, seek to be effective partners in the peace process. We can be friends to both the Israelis and the Palestinians: we can also use constructively our warm and close relations with the U.S. administration. We are not simply seeking a role out of pride, or out of jealousy at the United States' role. On the contrary, we believe that our constructive engagement will assist the peace process.

Syrian and Lebanese tracks

I should also say a word about the Syrian and Lebanese tracks. It will be a gross error to allow these to stagnate. Just look at the current cost of stagnation: the continuing loss of Israeli life in southern Lebanon; the depredations suffered by the local Lebanese population; and the growing risk of frustrated Syria collaborating with Iraq and even Iran. Nobody can be complacent about these risks, especially if they are indirectly providing the opening for Iran. Secular Syria cooperates with Islamist Iran as a means of strengthening its bargaining position. Iran in consequence is making inroads into Lebanon through Hizbollah. Without Israel's occupation of southern Lebanon, Hizbollah would lose its main raison d'être, and Iran its proxy. Surely the moral here is to work urgently on the Syrian track along the lines on which the previous Israeli government was working and was making progress. Putting the Syrian track on hold is a dangerous risk.

Iran

I have just referred to Iran: a country which has occupied a great deal of policy-makers' time on both sides of the Atlantic. We and our European Union partners share much of the United States' analysis of the challenges posed by Iran. We are all watching with interest for changes in Iranian policy after the election of President Khatami especially as Iran is an important regional player, and a society which is developing. However, we remain concerned about Iran's continued support for terrorism, and for groups opposed through violence to the Middle East peace process; about her efforts to acquire weapons of mass destruction; about her appalling human rights record and discrimination against religious minorities. The European Union's tough response to the Mykonos verdict in April sent a strong signal to Tehran that the EU will not tolerate Iran's sponsorship of terrorism. I am glad EU heads of mission are now back where they belong, in Tehran, to keep a close eye on Iranian behaviour on all these fronts.

And in Britain we have a particularly strong grievance with Iran. We find it totally unacceptable that in the case of the British author Salman Rushdie, Iran has declared a death sentence against one of our citizens. No country claiming to be part of the international community can wage its own private war against the citizens of another country.

We also cooperate actively with the U.S. to try to modify Iranian behaviour. For example, Tony Blair and other European leaders have, like President Clinton, raised their concern directly with President Yeltsin about Russian technical assistance to Iran's ballistic missile programme.

We and our EU partners believe it is better not to isolate Iran totally, using our contacts to make clear to Iran that she cannot hope to have a normal relationship with the West until she ceases to have unacceptable policies. On this note I must take advantage of my presence in Washington to highlight what an impediment the Iran/Libya Sanctions Act is to closer political cooperation between

the EU and the U.S. The U.K. and its EU partners are opposed in principle to extra-territorial legislation of this kind.

Sanctions against an EU company for making what are in my view legitimate investments in Iran's hydrocarbon sector will lead to a Transatlantic row which will benefit nobody but the hawks in Iran. I know that this was not the aim of the authors of this legislation. We need to work together to prevent this scenario. After all, there is no space between us in our shared objective of curbing unacceptable behaviour by Iran.

Iraq

When we have worked closely together, as recently on Iraq, we have been able to sustain our values, and to support international law. There was no doubt in the mind of the U.K. government of the threat posed by Saddam Hussein. This is why no option was ruled out in pursuit of our objective on the return of the UNSCOM officials.

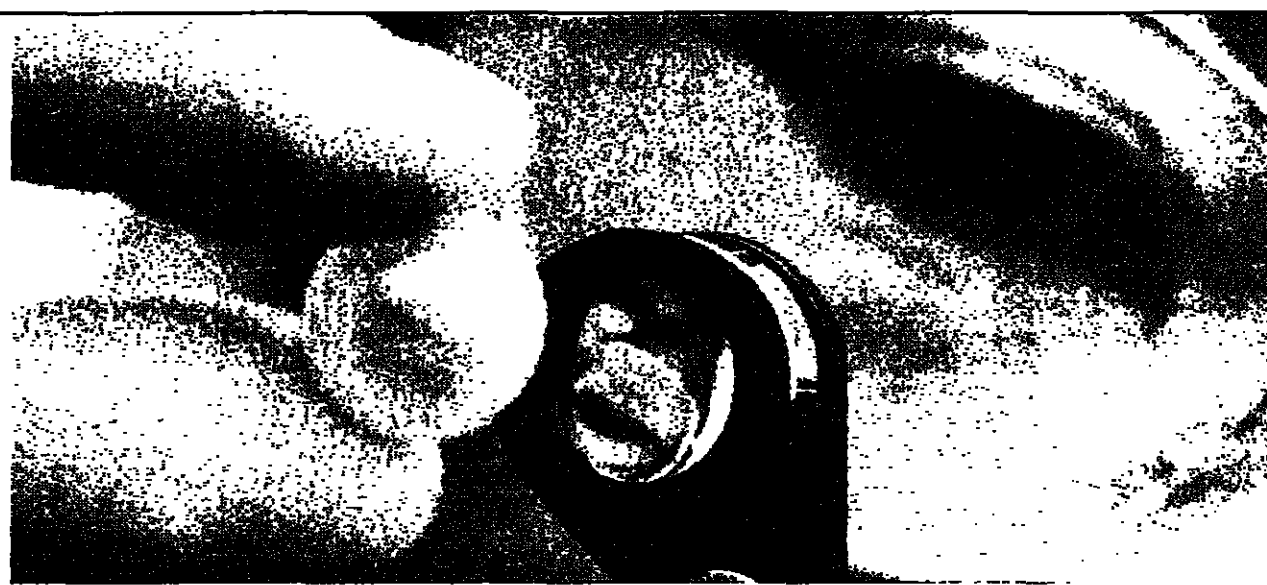
This will not be the last Iraqi challenge to the U.N. Saddam Hussein's strategy is clearly to escape from sanctions while keeping his weapons of mass destruction intact. As both our governments made clear throughout the latest crisis, the lifting of sanctions can only begin when UNSCOM has reported full compliance with the demands of Security Council resolution 987. Judging from Saddam's track record, that is unlikely while he remains in power. But we are right not to rule it out, and to hold out the prospect that once the government of Iraq has complied with the Security Council's demands, sanctions can be lifted. Meanwhile, the Iraqi people continue to suffer. Our quarrel is not with them. Our governments were clearly right, having sponsored the original Security Council resolutions on "oil-for-food" to put some stress recently on the need to make these arrangements work as efficiently as possible and to look, at the case for expansion if, for example, the U.N. secretary general were to recommend a wider range of humanitarian goods to meet Iraqi needs.

Of course it is for the Iraqi people to decide how their country should be governed. One day, I hope, Iraq will be ruled by a government which respects human rights and humanitarian law, implements all its international obligations and pursues policies in the interests of all the peoples of Iraq, whatever their ethnic origin or religion. Such an Iraq could take its rightful place in the family of nations as a respected member. The process of reconstruction and renewal could begin in earnest. The international community would stand ready to help. Everyone can see the huge potential which Iraq could realise. Such an Iraq would also bring peace, stability and security to the region after so many years when it has bullied and frightened neighbouring states.

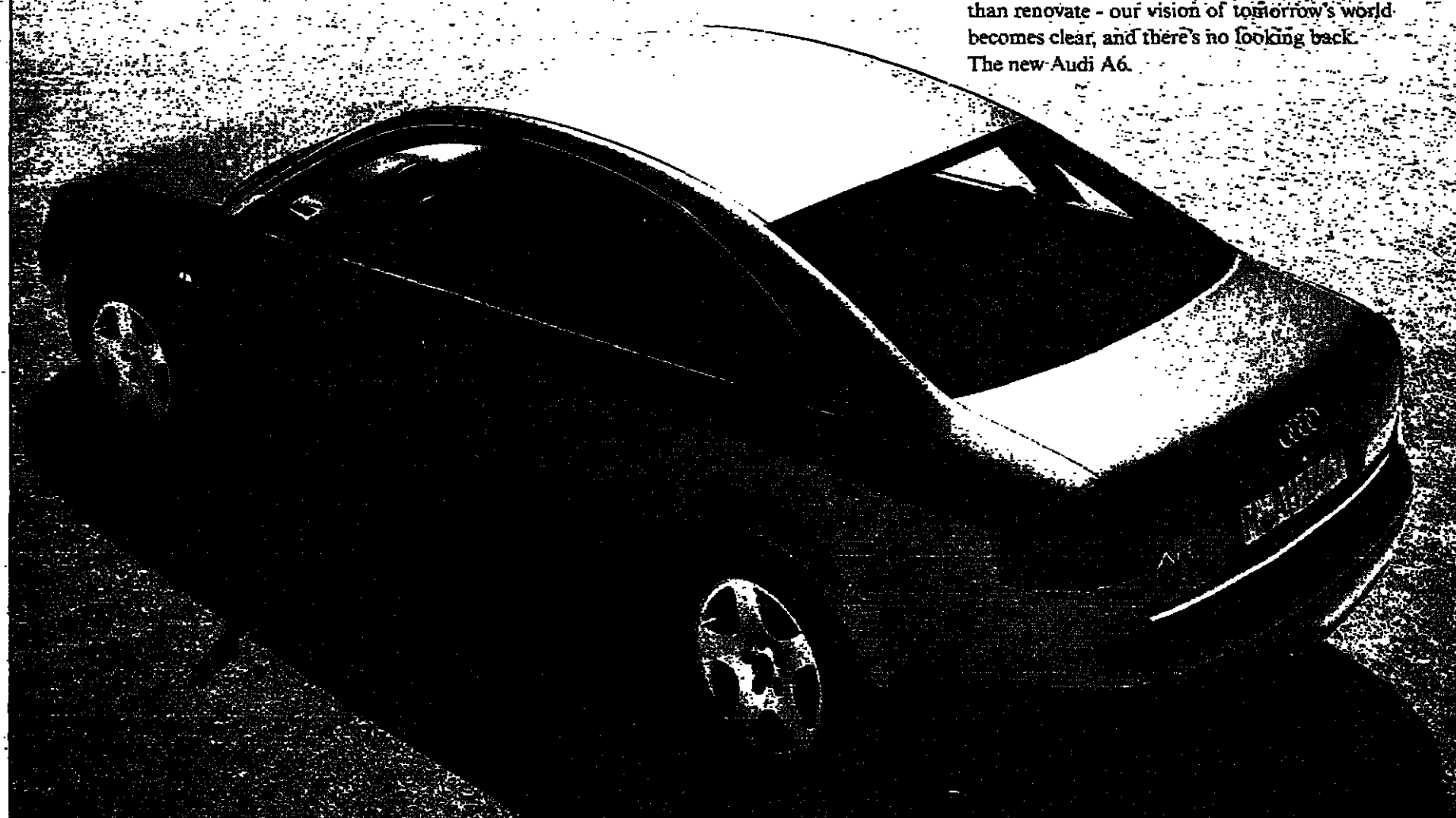
Meanwhile, there will continue to be voices arguing, as they did in the recent crisis, that we should negotiate with Saddam Hussein. The response to that approach is clear: United Nations Security Council resolutions are not negotiable. On this the U.N. Security Council is unanimous. Saddam Hussein's recent defiance has simply reinforced the solidarity of the U.N. in its determination to see his weapons of mass destruction destroyed. We have learnt the vital lesson of the 20th century: when we appease in the short term we pay an even greater price in the longer term.

I have no doubt that progress in solving the Arab-Israeli dispute would unlock a great potential in the region: a potential for wider and broader peace and reconciliation; a potential for economic growth, long held back by the diversions of conflict; and thus a potential for the Middle East to bridge Europe and Asia more fully. I know that the United States will use its skills and influence to ensure that the benefits of peace are clear and achievable. We in Britain look forward to playing our part in that process. Particularly during our EU presidency in the first half of 1998. Working together, we could achieve a lasting and just peace to the Middle East which would clearly herald a new dawn for the 21st century.

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John Major says Gulf must
shape up to attract funds

GCC states draft law to attract investment

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab Gulf states have drafted a joint law to attract foreign capital to diversify their economies and reduce reliance on unpredictable oil export earnings, an official report has said.

The draft law, drawn up by the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), includes new incentives and easing curbs on foreign investors, according to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) daily Al Bayan.

The newspaper published the text of the draft law for encouraging investment, which will be presented for approval by the GCC heads of state when they hold their annual summit in Kuwait on Dec. 20.

The law calls for the creation of a foreign investment committee in each member to attract capital and coordinate investment policies.

"Every committee is authorised to exempt foreign investors from the national partnership terms included in existing laws," it said.

Foreign investors in the GCC are currently not permitted to own more than 49 per cent of any project, a rule that has been blamed for the relatively low investment by Japan and other industrial countries.

The United States and the European Union have repeatedly urged the GCC to lift restrictions to encourage foreign capital.

GCC states — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the UAE — need industrial technology to ease dependence on oil, which provides more than two thirds of their income. They have

pumped nearly \$60 billion into the manufacturing sector but most of the products are light.

The new law allows free profit and capital transfer for foreign investors and exempts them from customs tariffs on several imported products as well as from income taxes for five years, which could be extended.

The committee will also identify investment opportunities and cut red-tape to facilitate movement of capital to the 16-year-old political, defence and economic alliance.

Meanwhile, former British prime minister John Major Sunday gave Arab Gulf states a checklist of things they must do to attract the foreign capital they badly need to diversify their oil-led economies.

"Job creation and inward investment are essential. Oil and natural resources are insufficient in themselves," he told a conference in Oman, adding the stalled Middle East peace process made the six Arab Gulf states' task all the harder.

Mr. Major said among things investors were looking for in the region were stable government, competent bureaucracy, developed infrastructure, skilled workforce, competitive taxes, free capital flows, clear company law and sound legal enforcement.

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates are trying to lure foreign and private investment to develop their economies away from oil, but economists say red tape, lengthy decision-making procedures and poor legal enforcement in some Gulf

states are keeping investors at bay.

A fast-growing and often unskilled population reliant on foreign labour is another deterrent to foreign cash, they say.

Calling the stalemate in the Middle East peace process "thoroughly unhelpful," Mr. Major urged Arab Gulf states to throw their weight behind an Arab-Israeli settlement.

He said although the Gulf had a higher world profile than some developing states thanks to foreign involvement in the region's oil industry, it faced new competition for funds.

In particular, Mr. Major saw Brazil, Indonesia, China, India and Russia increasingly becoming more attractive homes for international capital. "These five countries are going to change our world between now and 2020," he said.

"At the moment they form one half of the labour force, but less than one-tenth of total production. By 2020 these countries are going to double their share of production and account for one-and-a-half times the European Union's share of world trade (compared to one third now)," he said.

Mr. Major urged the Gulf, where most currencies are pegged to the dollar and which counts Europe as its biggest trading partner, to prepare for the single European currency in 1999.

"I have no doubt that it will go ahead on time, but I have very real doubts about whether it should go ahead," he said, adding that it was "too risky" for sterling to join the single Euro currency at this stage.

Asian market crisis a 'blessing in disguise' — IMF's Camdessus

BARCELONA (AFP) — The economic crisis currently playing havoc with Asian markets will one day be seen as a "blessing in disguise" if the right measures are taken, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Director Michel Camdessus has said.

If they implement IMF recovery programmes to the letter, he told a conference here, the affected Asian countries "will emerge stronger" from the crisis, whose effects he said

would be "limited for the world economy."

In the wake of the crisis, a "more secure competitiveness" will emerge, said Mr. Camdessus.

"If the necessary macro-economic reforms had been applied sooner, they would not have had this problem," he said.

"Currency parity in Southeast Asian countries is below what is reasonable," he said, "and we are now facing market free-fall caused by a sudden loss of

confidence, to which the aggregate effect of the markets has excessively contributed."

Mr. Camdessus said once an accord was reached with the IMF, the affected countries "will tighten their belts and make a greater effort at recovery, confidence will return and exchange rates will stabilise."

"This excess in exchange competitiveness should not last long," he said.

G-8 agree on reforms, poised to review social security

KOBE, Japan (AFP) — The Group of Eight (G-8) industrialised nations have agreed at a jobs conference to promote reforms, while saying it was also down to workers to upgrade their skills to improve their employability.

The conference also identified the need to review social security systems to make them more "employment-friendly."

"Macroeconomic policies must be supported by structural reforms as well as active labour market policies to translate growth into jobs," the chairs of the two-day Kobe jobs conference said in a written conclusion.

"We reaffirmed our commitment to observe internationally recognised core labour standards and looked forward to the outcome of work on this currently underway at the International Labour Organisation," the chair's statement said.

"We stressed the importance of further promoting a dialogue between government, labour and management," the statement added.

For the first time trade union representatives joined the conference, co-chaired by Japanese Labour Minister Bunmei Iwaki and International Trade and Industry Minister Mitsuo Horiuchi.

The Kobe gathering followed ones in Detroit in 1994 and Lille in France in 1996.

Russia took part for the first time alongside Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, and the United States.

The G-8 participants also called for efforts on the part of workers.

Individuals should "take up new challenges and to voluntarily enhance and upgrade skills in order to create an adaptable workforce," it said.

It urged them to improve "employability through intensive training and educational programmes which allow workers to acquire the skills indispensable to perform in newly emerging sectors."

The statement also pointed to the need to review social security systems to "utilise private-sector vitality and to examine the best combination of private and public sector initiatives."

"To ensure the compatibility between an ageing society and the maintenance of economic vitality, we recognised the importance of adapting some social security systems in order to make them more employment friendly, more moderate the public burden," it said.

"This will set up a sustainable social security system and contribute to a strong economic

base necessary for the maintenance and the creation of employment," it said.

Japan's Horiuchi told a joint news conference winding up the meeting: "The nations agreed to curb increasing public (welfare) expenses and maintain economic vitality by reforming social security systems and promoting employment of older people."

The G-8 also came up with six ideas of follow-up activities.

The projects, to be operated through voluntary efforts among interested members and also open for participation by other countries, included the establishment of a "Global Venture Forum."

It aims to hold a global business convention where entrepreneurs or heads of venture enterprises with innovative technologies or products are given chances to present their business plans and meet prospective partners.

The convention will be annually held in Osaka, the western industrial hub of Japan, the chair's conclusive statement said in an annex.

The G-8 will hold another conference in London in February on growth, employability and inclusion, ahead of a sum-

Canada economy gains momentum, but labour reform lags behind — OECD

PARIS (AFP) — The Canadian economy has gained considerable momentum in the past year, but labour reform has lagged behind other changes and a rise in interest rates may be needed to keep inflation in check, the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) has said.

"The Canadian economy has expanded again at a robust pace since mid-1996," with growth expected at "just under 3.5 per cent through 1998" and favourable prospects for sustained non-inflationary growth, the OECD said in its annual survey of Canada.

Forecast gross domestic product (GDP) growth of 3.6 per cent for 1997 and 3.4 per cent for 1998, up from 1.5 per cent in 1996, with external demand continuing to underpin economic activity.

These forecasts are higher than those given for Canada in the

OECD's mid-year economic outlook, but do not take into account the latest developments in the Asian financial crisis.

Senior OECD officials said on Friday that so far, it expects the Asia crisis to trim some 0.2 per cent off its growth forecasts for industrial countries in the next two years, but it is still finalising figures for its twice-yearly economic outlook report due to be published in December.

The Canada report said a rise in short-term interest rates may be necessary "to prevent the emergence of inflationary pressure," after progressive rate cuts brought interest rates to their lowest level in decades by the end of 1996, the OECD said.

"Although there does not seem to be a pressing need for a rapid tightening at this time, a move in this direction might prove nec-

essary to prevent inflation from overshooting the target," the report said.

The timing and the extent of any rise in rates "would depend on the movement of the exchange rate."

While the government has carried out needed structural reforms, "labour market reform has lagged initiatives in other areas," and structural unemployment remains high, the report said.

The report forecast the unemployment rate to fall to 9.2 per cent in 1997 and 8.8 per cent in 1998, down from 9.7 in 1996, below its mid-year forecast of 9.4 per cent this year and 9.1 in 1998, but said the continuing high jobless level, and jobless rates among the young, "are worrying developments."

THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

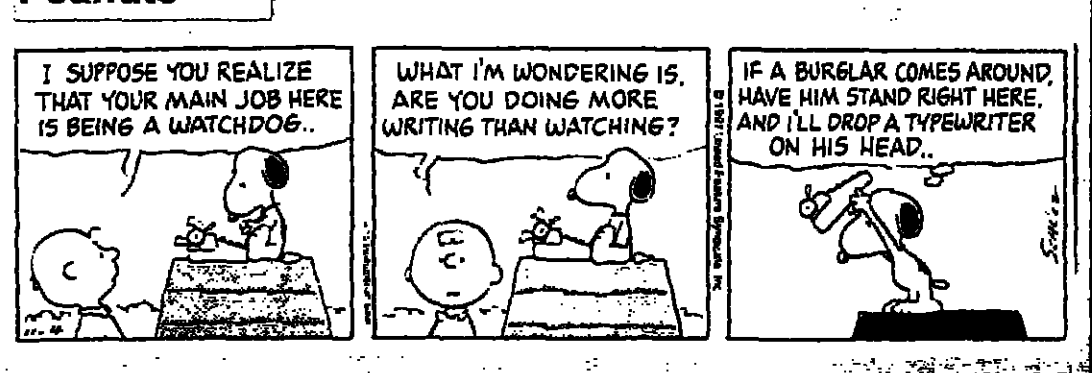
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19 Dog tails?
20 Compass point
21 Sirs role on "Star Trek: TNG"
22 Lana Turner movie, "X"
23 Shuttle grp.
24 Annapolis sch.
25 Nammy's nation
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28 Dog tails?
29 Guam's largest city
30 Neighbor of Wisc.
31 Twaddle
32 Decoy
33 Actress McClurg
34 Honolulu's island
35 Actor Reeves
36 Weather grp.
37 Holiday abbreviation
38 Abner's drawer
39 Musical melody
40 Program choices
41 Tolu
42 Author of "The Minister's Wooing"
43 Potassium carbonate
44 One condo
45 Blade of a harrow

9 Ben, the painter
10 Gloomily ill-humored
11 Moses, the ballplayer
12 Poetic meadows
13 Ancient stringed instrument
14 Process sea water
15 Alternative to medicine
16 Skiers' mecca
17 Neighbor of Togo
18 French actor Delon
19 Ayres, the actress
20 Scrawny person
21 Mollie
22 Passover meal
23 "Canto general"
24 poet
25 Stop flowing
26 Couple from Madrid?

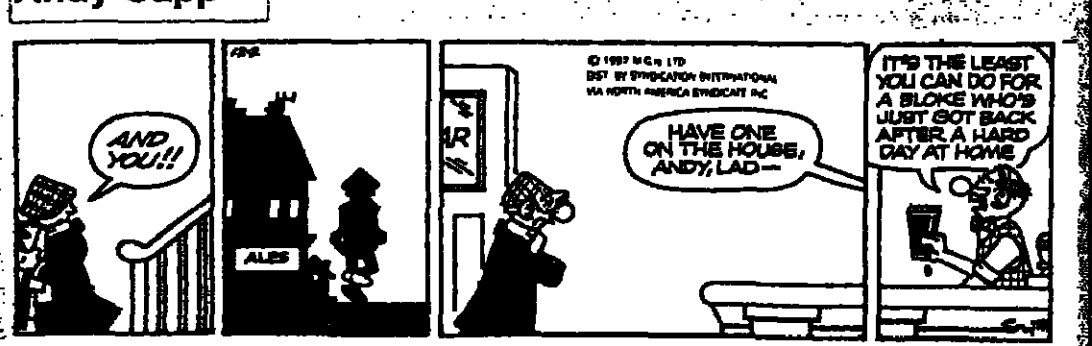
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43 Tarzan wannabe
44 Actress Ana...
45 Holdside support
46 Workplace watchdog grp.
47 Like so

58 Chile and fever
59 "Mist"
60 Fink
61 John-Doe dog
62 Ramble
63 Workplace watchdog grp.
64 Like so

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY, DECEMBER 1, 1997

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Someone who has more experience, and who just cares more about the subject than you do, is issuing orders left and right. Instead of arguing, simply comply. You'll make your life a lot easier, and you'll make a much better impression. Follow orders as if you meant it.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You're being lured by love, adventure and even curiosity. Taurus has a reputation for being sedentary, but that certainly is not your inclination now. Count your money early this morning, so you can start planning a trip this afternoon. Don't make it all business, either.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) You and a partner need to get practical. Pool your resources and figure out what you're going to do next. You need a budget, although you probably hate the "b" word. You'd rather spend whatever you have on whatever you want. A bigger prize can be yours, but only with planning.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) Somebody you know and love wants to help, but may rather ham-handed about it. This is not from lack of trying. It may actually be from a lack of understanding. It's not going to work for you to ditz out. Stay in control. Let the other person know exactly what's needed.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Your workload's intense. You'd rather be skiing, sledding or doing anything else outside. Don't despair. You'll think of something. You always do. It might not be as much fun as what you had in mind, but at this point in the game you may have to take what you can get.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You're feeling passionate and sensual, assertive yet seductive. Let yourself become wild and uninhibited — only in the utmost privacy, of course. Go to the trouble to set the scene. This is the perfect evening to discuss long-term goals with your true love.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) You may have made commitments you are not quite able to keep. Not to worry. You'll do fine. Somebody you know well has the expertise you lack. Get together with that person this evening for private lessons. Don't be frustrated if it takes a while. Practice is required.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You love the old traditions, and you maintain them very well. It gives your family a sense of security. Might as well start hauling out all that stuff one more time. Your home is an absolute shrine to the traditions you hold most dear. And that's just how it should be, too.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Your focus is on money. You might as well get used to it. You're getting warmed up for a bigger task ahead. Start by figuring out how much you have to spend on presents this year. If there's not enough, get assertive. Call in debts that other people owe you.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You've been avoiding a tough assignment because it was simply too complex. Or maybe you didn't have all the facts you needed. Give it your best shot now. Don't get too headstrong about it, though. Listen to input from others to make the wise decision.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You and your friends have all sorts of nice plans. Put them on hold for a while. You'll have to take care of a rush job first. You'll notice that everybody is pretty cheerful about the whole situation. That makes the job much easier.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You and your friends are having a marvellous time. You're also getting the work done, of course. The boss is watching, to make sure. He or she is in a jovial mood, however. You're all working cheerful together, and getting a lot done. Make that your objective, anyway.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

THE BETTER HALF.

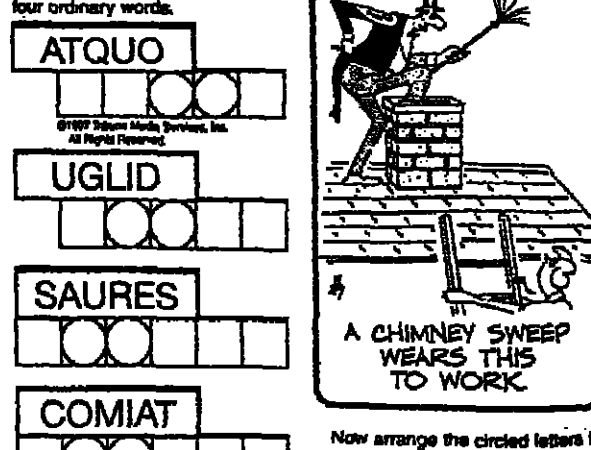
By Glasbergen



"We broke up and got back together three times. Aside from that, it was a lovely reception."

JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.



Print answer here: A

Yesterday's Jumbles: BURST EXTOL TRICKY BOUGHT Answer: The lawyer didn't want to do this during the trial — COURT TROUBLE

A TV lecture, the
general at the Higher
and Technology said
science, research and dev
not less than one per
national product. This me
get department should allo
mentioned that all advance
not less than one per
national product annually
the research projects.
The assistant secretary
expected budget for the Hi
Science and Technology fo
million as requested, but
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a research is one per cen
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son with the Ministry

REUTERS

The I

Major Currencies			
Currency	USD	JPY	
US Dollar	1.0000		
DE Mark	0.5667		
GB Sterling	1.6885		
CH Franc	0.7015		
JP Yen	0.0078		
CA Dollar	0.7017		
IL Lira	0.0006		
NI Guilder	0.5030		
FR Franc	0.1694		

Currency			
Currency	USD	JPY	
US Dollar	1.0000		
Jordan Dinar	1.4114		
Saudi Riyal	0.2666		
Bahrain Dinar	2.65		
Oman Dinar	0.2747		
Kuwait Dinar	3.2895		
Emirates Dinar	0.2723		
Labanese/1000	0.66		
Egyptian	0.2946		

Energy			
Oil	Last	Previous	
Brent	18.81	19.44	
N. Texas	19.10	19.30	
Bonny	18.61	19.44	
Dubai	17.70	17.55	
UL Gas	184.00	185.00	

Metal Prices			
Metal	Bid	Ask	
Gold (oz's)	296.75	297.25	
Silver (oz's)	5.28	5.32	
Platinum (oz's)	382.25	382.75	
AL (3 Months)	1599		
CU (3 Months)	1876		
Zinc (3 Months)	1161		
Lead (3 Months)	547		
Ni (3 Months)	6170		

Bourse			
Bourse	Index		
New York	DOW JO		
New York	S&P 50		
London	FT-SE		
Tokyo	NIKKEI		
Paris	CAC 40		
Frankfurt	DAX		

Commodity			
Commodity	Last	Previous	
Coffee (lb/ton)	0		
Cocoa (lb/ton)	1604		
Sugar (lb/ton)	302.5		
Wheat (lb/ton)	128		
Soy (lb/ton)	155		
Barley (lb/ton)	155		
Rice (lb/ton)	370		

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A review of news from the Arabic Press

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TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL 634144 PHILADELPHIA "1" <i>Chris O'Donell & Jene Hackman ... in</i> THE CHAMBER Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL 634143 PHILADELPHIA "2" <i>Charles Grodin ... in</i> BEETHOVEN'S 2ND Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, THE BEAUTICIAN & THE BEAST Shows: 8:30, 10:30	CINEMA TEL 699238 PLAZA <i>Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in</i> AL MASEER (Arabic) <i>Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival</i> Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:30	CINEMA TEL 677420 CONCORD CONCORD "1" <i>Rowan Atkinson... in</i> MR. BEAN Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" SLEEP WALKERS Shows: 3:30, 6:00 only	CINEMA TEL 679 1340 GALLERIA 1 ABDOUN <i>Nour Al Sharif & Layla Alwi... in</i> AL MASEER (Arabic) <i>Winner in the 1997 Cannes festival</i> Shows: 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45	CINEMA TEL 679 1343 GALLERIA 2 ABDOUN NOTHING TO LOSE Shows: 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Hisham Yanes Theatre TEL: 625155 <i>NOW ON DAILY</i> THE GOVERNMENT IN THE SERVICE OF PEOPLE <i>Starring Hisham Yanes and Amal Dabbas</i> For reservations call: 640155, 625155
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Spurs beat Mavs; Rockets win

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Avery Johnson scored eight of his 16 points during a 31-15 third-quarter run for the Spurs who won 96-87.

David Robinson scored 18 points and grabbed 12 rebounds against an over-matched Samaki Walker, who was making his first career start at center for Dallas.

Rookie Tim Duncan added 17 points and 14 rebounds for San Antonio.

Michael Finley paced the Mavericks with 35 points and nine rebounds.

Jazz 94, Clippers 91: In Los Angeles, Karl Malone's fallaway 10-foot jumper with 23 seconds remaining lifted Utah.

Malone scored 16 of his season-high 42 points in the fourth quarter and pulled down 18 rebounds. Malone's big shot gave Utah a 92-91 lead. Jeff Hornacek, who added 17 points for the Jazz, made two free throws with six seconds left to complete the scoring.

RESULTS

Atlanta	98	Charlotte	80
Cleveland	103	Boston	97
Milwaukee	93	Miami	87
New York	102	Phoenix	80
Chicago	88	Washington	83
Minnesota	106	Vancouver	87
San Antonio	96	Dallas	87
Houston	107	Golden State	100
Utah	94	LA Clippers	91

Pooh Richardson missed an off-balance 3-point shot which would have tied the game, and the ball bounced back to him, but the buzzer sounded before he could get off another shot.

Eric Piatkowski, making his first start of the season, led the Clippers with 20 points and a career-high 13 rebounds.

Rockets 107, Warriors 100: In Oakland, California, Charles Barkley had 43 points and Houston scored 27 straight points starting late in the second period as Golden State remained winless at home.

Barkley had 15 of his points as the Rockets held Golden State scoreless for nearly nine minutes during a run that turned an 18-point deficit into a nine-point lead.

The Warriors, who led by as many as 19 points in the second period, are 0-5 at home and 1-13 overall this season.

Kevin Willis added 15 points and 12 rebounds for Houston, which won its fifth straight.

Donyell Marshall had 24 points and 17 rebounds, and Latrell Sprewell had 22 points for Golden State.

Monaco back to top

PARIS (AFP) — Champions Monaco took over at the top of the French league for the first time this season as Nigerian striker Viktor Ikpeba scored a double in their 2-0 win over new boys Chateauroux on Saturday.

Monaco, suffering no ill-effects after their comeback from behind 3-2 European Champions League win over Sporting Lisbon in midweek, lead Metz by a point although the eastern French side can go back to the top if they beat Bordeaux away on Sunday — something they haven't managed since 1980.

Monaco benefitted from a surprise defeat for the 1993 European Cup champions Olympique Marseille, who lost 1-0 away at Nantes — the 1995 champions scoring their first win in November.

Nantes' hero was Jocelyn Gourvennec, who benefited from woeful defending by Marseille's Fabrizio Ravanelli and Hamada Jambay sprinting away to slip the ball past German international 'keeper Andreas Kopke for his sixth goal of the season.

Strasbourg, who beat Serie A leaders Inter Milan in their UEFA Cup third round, first leg tie on Tuesday, came down to earth as they lost 3-2 away at Lens.

Lyon, who were knocked out by Inter Milan in the previous round of the UEFA Cup despite beating them away in the first leg, won their third consecutive home match in beating Rennes 3-1.

Lyon striker Frederic Kanoute notched a double, the second four minutes from time to restore the two-goal advantage, while veteran Daniel Bravo, signed from Parma earlier in the month, also netted for their home side.

The only consolation for relegation-threatened Rennes was that Stephane Gregoire scored their first away goal since October 17.

Swedes humiliate Americans in 5-0 Davis Cup win

GOTHENBURG (AFP) — Sweden, who ensured their sixth Davis Cup victory on Saturday, completed a humiliating 5-0 victory over the United States in the 1997 Final by winning both of Sunday's reverse singles.

Jonas Bjorkman hammered Jonathan Stark, a late replacement for Alex O'Brien, 6-1, 6-1, and Magnus Larsson beat Michael Chang 7-6 (7/4), 6-7 (6/8), 6-4.

Dead rubbers are reduced to the 'best-of-three' sets.

Stark was called up to play Sunday's opening singles because of the injury on Friday to World No. 1 Pete Sampras, who had to withdraw after pulling a calf muscle during his first-day singles against Larsson.

Chang's defeat was the latest in a long series which have turned his end of season into a nightmare.

The World No. 3, who has now been beaten in six of his last seven matches, tried desperately to salvage a point for the Americans — but he was constantly pulled out of position by Larsson's drop shots and heavy cross-court forehands.

Bjorkman, who has confirmed his status as 'player of the year' by climbing from 69th to fourth in the rankings, scored his third victory of the weekend.

"This is my year," smiled the Swedish hero after outplaying Stark in just 47 minutes.

"Everything — I do is going my way. I was very relaxed out there today and I really enjoyed myself."



Sweden's Jonas Bjorkman returns a serve to Jonathan Stark of the United States during second round singles action at the Davis Cup finals in Gothenburg, November 30. Sweden has already won the Davis Cup in three straight matches, but the second round matches are to be played in full. Bjorkman won his match 6-1 6-1 (Reuters photo)

Although Sweden had already clinched the trophy, the 11,500-capacity stadium was almost full with 10,833 spectators coming through the turnstiles Sunday. In all

33,401 spectators attended the Final at the Gothenburg Scandinavium over the three days. The last time the United States were beaten 5-0 in the final was in 1973

when Neale Fraser's legendary Australian team of John Newcombe, Rod Laver, Ken Rosewall and Mal Anderson completed the feat in Cleveland, Ohio.

Kaiserslautern celebrate 'Golden Autumn'

BONN (AFP) — Kaiserslautern's 2-1 victory over Hamburg on Saturday rewrote the record books as they became the first ever newly promoted Bundesliga side to win the so-called "Autumn championship", topping the standings at the halfway mark of the season.

They have a four point lead over Bayern Munich who play Bayer Leverkusen on Sunday, while both Stuttgart and Schalke 04 lie third and fourth after drawing their respective matches — though they are 10 points behind the leaders.

Hertha Berlin maintained their recent resurgence by claiming their fifth win in six matches, 1-0 in Duisburg. Borussia Moenchengladbach meanwhile must look for a new coach after Hannes Bongartz threw in the towel on Saturday after a disappointing 2-0 home defeat at the hands of Wolfsburg.

Borussia Moenchengladbach are third from bottom with 18 points at the season's halfway point with only VfL Bochum and three times champions FC Cologne below them on 16.

The pressure became too much for Hannes Bongartz with Gladbach's fans cynically applauding the Wolfsburg team after their

side's loss.

Without speaking to his players, Bongartz broke the news of his departure at the post-match press conference.

His decision followed the publication of handwritten notes last week, stolen from the briefcase of new president Wilfried Jakobs, that revealed the trainer would be sacked during the Christmas break if they didn't start winning.

Fredi Bobic's theatrical dive to the turf gave 10 man Stuttgart the penalty they needed to sneak a 2-2 draw in Bremen.

Schalke coach Huub Stevens celebrated his 44th birthday with a 1-1 draw in Arminia Bielefeld.

Weakened by the absence of workhorses Radoslaw Lalaj and Belgian veteran Marc Wilmots, Schalke fell a goal behind after 70 minutes when Giuseppe Reina chipped home a cross.

Martin Max equalised however 13 minutes later, capping Schalke's only real threatening move in the second half. Jiri Nemec leaned into his defender, turned and then slipped the ball through to Max who timed his break perfectly to beat Bielefeld's offside trap.

South African born striker Sean Dundee ended his four month goal scoring

drought with one of Karl-Heinz Riedle's three in their 3-0 romp over Hansa Rostock.

"It was as if we were playing with only 10 men," proud trainer Wilfried Schaefer commented — six of his first choice team were unable to play because of injury and suspension.

"Everyone ran their hearts out for the other," he added.

A lethargic opening by Duisburg helped Hertha Berlin to their win thanks to Michael Preetz's 22nd minute goal.

"We are disappointed because we had counted on winning," Duisburg coach Friedhelm Funkel summed up.

"We wanted to start well but instead allowed Hertha to take the initiative and only woke up after the goal. We were unable to translate our second half superiority into goals though," he added.

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General Assembly to vote on upgrade of Palestinian status in U.N. this week — Kidwa

UNITED NATIONS (AFP)

— Palestine's observer mission this week launches a bid to secure additional rights and privileges for the Palestinians at the United Nations.

Palestine's observer to the United Nations, Nasser Kidwa told AFP that a vote on the issue is expected on Wednesday or Thursday after the annual debate on Middle East issues in the U.N. General Assembly opening on Monday.

He says that the move reflects the political realities on the ground, with an elected Palestinian National Authority now in place in self-rule areas since January 1996.

The effort is part of a general Palestinian offensive at the United Nations, to protest the lack of progress in the Middle East peace process.

The 15 European Union states hope to reach a unified position in response to the draft resolution which would give Palestine the same rights and privileges as U.N. member states in General Assembly affairs and U.N.-convened conferences.

But the draft resolution explicitly rules out giving the Palestine observer mission voting rights and excludes the Palestinians from fielding candidates for U.N. posts.

"We are negotiating among ourselves and with the Palestinians," on the draft, a European ambassador said. "The Palestinians won't get all they would like."

Mr. Kidwa says that the draft resolution under consideration would give his mission "super-observer" status. The Palestine mission has had observer status at the United Nations since 1974.

The Palestinians point out that the draft does not entail seeking full U.N. membership, nor achieving official U.N. recognition of a Palestinian state.

Among the other resolutions to be considered by

the 185-nation General Assembly this week is a controversial amendment stating that the Israeli mission's credentials "do not relate to or cover" the Arab-populated territories occupied by Israel since 1967.

However if that amendment reaches the U.N. General Assembly floor, which is not certain, the European Union has made it clear that all 15 states would cast negative votes.

U.N. diplomats said that the European Union is usually crucial in such General Assembly votes, as eastern European states are influenced by the EU position as are some developing countries.

Arab League urges release of woman hunger striker

CAIRO (R) — Arab League

Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid has urged the international community to intervene urgently on behalf of a Palestinian woman on hunger strike in an Israeli jail for more than a month.

The Arab League said in a statement that Mr. Abdul Meguid also called on human rights groups to persuade Israel to release Itaf Alayan, who has vowed not to eat until she is freed.

Sunday is the 40th day of Ms. Alayan's hunger strike. She is close to the Islamist

Jihad group, which warned Israel last week that it would retaliate if any harm came to her.

The statement said Ms. Alayan "was on the verge of paying with her life for Israeli practices that violate the four Geneva conventions specific to the protection of citizens under occupation."

"The Secretary-General strongly condemned the inhuman detention practices of the Israeli authorities in the occupied Arab lands," it said.

Ms. Alayan, sentenced to 14 years in jail in 1987 for trying

to carry out an attack against Israelis and for trying to kill a prison guard, was released in February 1996 with 30 other women prisoners as part of the interim peace deals.

She was rearrested in October and placed in administrative detention under Israeli laws that allow suspects to be held without charge or trial for months.

Ms. Alayan has described the hunger strike as "a proper means for use in a struggle against a force that is not accountable, not open to legal or logical argument."

Troops kill 26 rebels in Algerian offensive — paper

PARIS (R) — Algerian

troops, backed by helicopter gunships, killed 26 Islamist guerrillas at a rebel camp south of the Algerian capital, where 25 civilians had been slaughtered at a roadblock, a national daily said Sunday.

Crack troops on Saturday stormed the guerrilla camp near Larbaa, 25 kilometres south of Algiers, killing the 26, said Al Khabar newspaper.

The troops, who had been besieging the camp since early last week, still had an unspecified number of guerrillas trapped in the area, it said.

Two other Algerian newspapers reported varied versions on the operation. L'Authentique daily said the government forces, helped by air force special commandos, destroyed the camp at the end of the raid.

Liberte newspaper reported that the forces were continuing the siege of dozens of rebels holed up at the camp which lies at the foot of a mountain near Larbaa, main guerrilla stronghold in Blida region.

It was in the Larbaa area that gunmen shot dead or hacked to death 25 civilians they caught at a fake roadblock Thursday, according to the Algerian newspaper Le Soir D'Algerie.

Al Aeil newspaper said the government forces found the body of a young girl near Larbaa on Saturday. It did not say who killed the girl but said rebels attempted to carry out a big attack in the area on Wednesday apparently to help comrades besieged by the troops.

No one claimed responsibility for the roadblock killing, the latest in a series in which dozens of civilians have died in the past two years in many parts of Algeria.

The government has blamed Islamist guerrillas for these attacks and the massacre of thousands of villagers in remote areas and in poor districts in Algiers.

The government forces' operation in Larbaa was the third such heavy offensive against rebels since July when Algerian newspapers said up to 150 guerrillas had been killed in Hataba area in Blida.

But the violence has continued unabated, and last month the army command sacked General Said Bey, chief of the first military region, covering Blida and Algiers.

He was replaced by General Bouhaba Rahab, former commander of the fifth military region in the east where the relatively moderate Islamic Salvation Army (AIS) is observing a ceasefire.



FREE VEGETARIAN FOOD FOR MUM AND CHILD: A monkey mother takes her baby to food provided at a 'monkey's party' in the central Thai province of Lopburi Sunday. The party is held annually by a group of local businessmen aimed at promoting tourism and protecting the animals which have been living in towns of this province for years (Reuters photo)

Iraq speaks of climate of war, Kuwait wary

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq said Sunday the situation in the Gulf region was similar to that on the eve of the 1991 Gulf war while Kuwait said it would test air raid sirens and import gas masks.

Syria, a key Arab member of the U.S.-led coalition forces which drove Iraqi troops from Kuwait nearly seven years ago, renewed its opposition to any military action against Iraq in the dispute with the United Nations over weapons inspections.

The official Iraqi newspaper Al Jumhuriya said the U.S. administration was under internal pressure to launch a decisive showdown with Baghdad.

"When pursuing what is taking place an accurate observer will easily notice the similarity between what happened before the 30-state aggression on Iraq [Gulf war] and what is happening now," Al Jumhuriya said in a front-page editorial.

U.N. arms inspectors in Baghdad left their base early Sunday in search of Iraq's banned weapons. They have so far avoided sites viewed by Iraq as part of its sovereignty and national security.

"We have faced no problems so far. Inspections are going smoothly," Nils Carlstrom, director of U.N. monitoring and verification centre in Baghdad, told Reuters.

Iraq said U.N. arms monitors inspected 31 sites during their Sunday searches. "The inspection activities went on without delay or obstacles with full support and backing from the Iraqi side," the official Iraqi news agency INA said, quoting Mohammad Ameen, head of Iraq's national monitoring directorate.

"Ameen urged the U.N. Special Commission to deeply think about the result of its various and many inspections, which are carried out on a daily basis and use them as means to build mutual trust," INA said.

Al Jumhuriya newspaper said the U.S. administration was under pressure from American media and experts, after the failure of its Iraq policy in the past, to "do what [former U.S. President] George Bush and [President Bill] Clinton could not do, that is the settling of the conflict with Iraq militarily once and for all."

A Kuwaiti interior ministry spokesman said Kuwait would test on Monday war sirens

Iraq renews invitation to presidential palaces

BAGHDAD (AFP) — President Saddam Hussein has renewed an invitation for more than 100 international observers to visit his palaces as part of the U.N. search for weapons secrets, Iraqi newspapers reported Sunday.

"Iraq still hopes that its invitation will be accepted by all those who do not have ulterior motives," according to a statement issued at the end of a meeting late Saturday between the president and his top officials.

It said Baghdad did not expect all those invited to accept "but still wants the visit to take place."

Iraq's offer "could lead the way to a solution wanted by some and thus serve the cause of peace and security, pushing things back from the dangerous abyss," it said.

But the Iraqi leadership stressed that the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of the country's disarmament was barred access to presidential palaces on the grounds of sovereignty.

throughout the tiny Gulf state for the first time since the 1991 Gulf war.

"This is the first time since the liberation of 154 sites linked throughout the state of Kuwait," the spokesman told Reuters in Kuwait. "The situation is not stable with Iraq continuing to play cat and mouse with the United Nations."

The warning sirens will go off at 11 a.m. to be followed by an all clear five minutes later, he said.

On Saturday Kuwait's Defence Minister Sheikh Salem Sabah Salem Sabah invited bids for the sale of gas masks and welcomed a move by private merchants who have already ordered masks in recent weeks to protect against chemical and biological weapons.

Syria's leadership, in a statement after a meeting Saturday night, said it opposes military action and called on Iraq to implement U.N. Security Council resolutions so that sanctions could be lifted as soon as possible.

The statement also criticised the United States for its "double standard policies" at the United Nations regarding Iraq and Israel.

Syria contributed troops to the alliance that liberated Kuwait.

Hundreds of mourners, some wailing and beating their chests, shouted insults against the United States and President Clinton during a funeral procession of 50 children Iraqi officials said died because of U.N. trade sanctions.

The wooden coffins, wrapped in white linen, were

mounted on pick-up trucks. Hundreds of people lined the colonnaded Rasheed Street. "God is greatest. America is the enemy of God," they shouted.

"What is our fault to be punished in this way?" Raheem Abbas told Reuters. "This is genocide. Clinton should be ashamed of himself."

It is the second such funeral organised by Iraqi authorities in one week. They say at least 4,000 Iraqi children die every month due to lack of medicine.

Iraq is showing the plight of its children because of U.N. trade sanctions imposed since its 1990 invasion of Kuwait to win international sympathy to have them eased or removed.

It says it has done what the international community requires from it to have the curbs on its oil exports completely lifted.

The U.S., with whom Iraq is at loggerheads over weapons inspections, insists that the sanctions will only be eased when international weapons experts testify that Iraq is clean of weapons of mass destruction.

Iraq's U.N. relief coordinator Denis Halliday left Baghdad for New York to discuss with Secretary-General Kofi Annan the possible renewal of Iraq's oil-for-food deal with the United Nations.

The current plan expires next Friday, Mr. Annan is due to give his recommendations in a report to the Council Monday, Iraq said on Saturday it would accept in principle an extension of the humanitarian programme allowing it oil exports worth \$2 billion in six months.



Gazan names quadruplets after Arafat and family

GAZA (R) — Yasser and Arafat aren't going to bring much peace to one Palestinian household. A bit underweight, the two boys in a set of quadruplets born in Gaza last week are still in hospital. Their two sisters Suha and Zahwa, named after the Palestinian president's wife and daughter, are already waiting away at home. Dad Atef Shaaban Siksik, 28, said doctors were surprised by the names he and his wife Mona, 24, had chosen. "But it is an expression of my love for the president whom I consider like a father, especially after my father's death in 1989 when he was shot by the Israelis," he said. "Now I get to sleep. When one girl cries, she wakes the other and both start crying. What will it be like when the boys come home? Maybe I should go and find another house to sleep in," Mr. Siksik said.

Hong Kong man risks life for \$1.29

HONG KONG (AFP) — In Hong Kong, where it is often said money rules above all else, a 60-year-old man risked his life to jump on to an underground railway line to recover a DOLLO (\$1.29) coin.

Station officers rushed to pull the man back on to the platform after he'd ignored his own safety to pick up the coin during the busy lunchtime period at suburban Prince Edward station, the Oriental Daily News reported. At that time of day trains pass through the station about two minutes apart. The newspaper published a photo showing the man happy to be reunited with his coin, while Mass Transit Railway Corp. officials were said to be taking legal advice on whether to charge him.

The man, who was said to be a retired teacher, was seen jumping on to the tracks after a train had passed. He was pulled back by station staff and taken to hospital, where he was treated for minor injuries. The man was released after a short stay in hospital.

'Michelangelo' of cigar world launches new brand

PARIS (AFP) — Avelino

Lara, known as the "Michelangelo" of the cigar since inventing Fidel Castro's big thick favourite, the Cohiba, is launching his own Bahamian-made brand, Lara ran the famed El Laguito plant outside Havana which produced Cuba's best and most expensive cigars. He created the Cohiba, the Rolls Royce of the cigar, in 1968, the only new brand marketed since, the "Lider Maximo," who since given up smoking, came into power. Lara was in Paris this week presenting his new hand-rolled cigars to a handful of Havana connoisseurs. He left Cuba after 60 years in the service of the government and has been working on "creating something smokable" for the past two years, he said.

Both men would also look to ways to boost political influence and access a market each cabinet decision to conduct a partial withdrawal from rural areas of the West Bank.

Foreign Minister Fayez Sayed, who will accompany the Prime Minister, said the talks come "in the framework of bilateral cooperation with our Palestinian brothers." He said to give further

Mother recognises bank robbers as son's friends

DALLAS (AP) — The son of a bank teller is accused of plotting a robbery at the bank where his mother worked. Damien Blunt, 23, had just dropped his mother, Belinda Coleman, off at a branch of main bank on Wednesday morning when two armed men wearing black stockings over their heads walked in. They took off with \$313,000, but not before Ms. Coleman said she recognised them through their masks as friends of her son, Armond Pleasant, 21, and Charles Pleasant, 24, were arrested that day. Blunt was arrested the following day and a fourth suspect is being sought.

Investigators believe the four men planned the hold-up together and later split the money.

Search for bodies, identification of corpses of Luxor victims continues

LONDON (AFP) — The confusion over the missing bodies of tourists killed in the Luxor massacre deepened Sunday after a report said Swiss officials had failed to identify a corpse mistakenly sent to Britain.

British officials announced Friday that the body repatriated to Halifax in the north of England last week was not that of air hostess Karina Turner, 24, whose five-year-old daughter Shaunnah also died in the shooting.

Two days earlier they made the same discovery regarding the body of her mother, Joan Turner, 53, but said her remains had been found in Zurich, while one of the bod-

ies sent to Halifax was that of a Swiss tourist.

However the Independent on Sunday said that the Swiss Consul General in London Robert Muller had told it that dental records had failed to identify the "Swiss" body which had been sent to Britain.

"It's not true that the Swiss body is in the U.K.," Mr. Muller was reported as saying. "We don't know where the Swiss body is."

The body mistakenly thought to be that of Karina Turner also remains unidentified.

The Turners were killed in the Nov. 17 massacre when Islamist gunmen opened fire

on visitors to the ancient monuments at Luxor.

A Foreign Office spokesman said Saturday that Karina Turner's body may have been sent to Bulgaria, Japan or Colombia, after a wrong identification in Egypt, or may have remained in the country, he added.

The three Britons were among the 68 victims of the massacre, including Egyptians, Swiss, Germans, Japanese and one Colombian.

Other reports said that two other Britons killed in the shooting, an elderly couple called George and Ivy Wigham, had been robbed of their wedding rings and other valuables afterwards.

SPLA leader tells Mubarak he does not want to split Sudan

CAIRO (AFP) — The southern rebels of the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) have no desire to break with Khartoum and destroy the country's unity, their leader John Garang told Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak here Sunday.

"Our movement is totally committed... to the necessity to maintain the unity of our country," Col. Garang told reporters following his first official meeting with the Egyptian president since he launched his uprising against the Khartoum authorities in 1983.

Egypt has entertained close relations with the northern Sudanese opposition since an assassination attempt against President Mubarak in Addis

Ababa in June 1995, which it accused Khartoum of involvement in.

But Egypt's relations with the SPLA have been hampered by fears that the rebels wish to set up an independent state in the largely Christian or animist south. Egypt has repeatedly made clear it will brook no division of Sudan, which it ruled jointly with Britain until 1956.

"We had a very good meeting," Col. Garang said of his meeting with the Egyptian president.

"I came to Egypt at His Excellency's invitation to brief the government and people of Egypt about the situation in the Sudan, the necessity to maintain the unity of our country — to which our movement is totally

committed," he said.

"We have a complete understanding with the president and various people I met here. I am very happy and satisfied with my visit."

But Col. Garang added that for Sudan's unity to be preserved, it was vital there be fundamental change in Khartoum.

"We say that for the Sudan to stay united — and to that unity we are committed — it is necessary that there be fundamental change so that we have a Sudan which includes all its people, in their ethnicities and their religions. This is what we call the new Sudan. It is the way forward."

Col. Garang stressed that he was visiting Egypt not just as SPLA leader but also as a leader of the National Democratic Alliance, an alliance between the SPLA and the main northern opposition parties set up in Asmara in 1995.

He said the alliance was "completely united" and represented "the majority of the Sudanese people."

He said recent peace talks with the Khartoum government "broke down over the issue of the constitutional separation of religion and state."

He blamed this on the National Islamic Front of Hassan Tourabi, widely seen as the power behind the military government in Khartoum.

Israel approves construction of 900 more settlers
Despite a U.S. veto on Jewish settlement expansion, the Israeli government has approved the construction of 900 more Jewish settlers in the West Bank and Gaza. The announcement was made by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday. The settlers will be housed in 300 new settlement units in the West Bank and Gaza. Netanyahu said the settlers would be housed in 300 new settlement units in the West Bank and Gaza. He said the settlers would be housed in 300 new settlement units in the West Bank and Gaza.

Majali, King's pullout plan
By Tareq Ayyoub
Jordan and Israel are well-known for their close relationship. The Jordanian King, Hussein, has been a strong supporter of Israel. The King's pullout plan from the West Bank and Gaza has been a major issue in the region. The King's pullout plan has been a major issue in the region.

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